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ABSTRACT

A project examined perspectives of offenders in adult correctional facilities in British Columbia (B.C.) in relation to their literacy needs and how and where those needs were being met. Information was gathered through a series of questionnaires sent to Directors of Correctional Centers in B.C., adult basic education (ABE) administrators with responsibility for educational contracts in B.C. Corrections, and instructors. The response rate was 69 percent. Seventy-eight inmates were interviewed in 9 adult facilities: 22 were participants in educational programs, and 56 were not. Fifteen of 17 facilities offered ABE programs. Several programs used volunteer tutors, although no established program funding existed. Sixty-one percent of inmate nonparticipants and all participants thought community tutors would be helpful. Many inmates had a history of academic failure and identified writing, spelling, and math as weaknesses. All felt strongly that education programs should be offered in all correctional centers. Most participants felt positive about their school experience. Most respondents were not in favor of mandatory educational assessments or attendance and favored incentives, usually pay at the same rate as work pay. Recommendations were for a clear definition of educational policy by B.C. Corrections, improvement of services for low-literate adults, and improvement of the literacy environment. (Appendixes include 43 references, a list of B.C. adult correctional facilities, service delivery standards, and samples of nonparticipants' writing.) (YLB)

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OPENING MINDS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:
Literacy in B.C. Corrections

A Research Report prepared by:

AUDREY M. THOMAS

for

The John Howard Society of British Columbia

Victoria, B.C.

1992

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FORWARD

"Opening Minds Behind Closed Doors" is a most appropriate title for this first time research into the literacy experience of persons incarcerated in British Columbia's correctional centres. The first opening of my mind to literacy awareness was in the late 1970's when Dr. Doug Ayers, a member of the John Howard Society Board of Directors and a faculty member of the University of Victoria, introduced me to 'prison education'. Dr. Ayers was one of the pioneers in this field. Many prisoners in the Federal system are progressing in their learning experience as a result of Doug's initiatives. The John Howard Society of B.C. would like to dedicate this research to Doug and to the many students who have found the courage to step onto the road of learning to read, write and perform math in order to function in today's society.

Prior to this study, in mid-1989, The John Howard Society of Canada performed some research into literacy programming in the Federal system. In that same year, the Provincial government established the Provincial Literacy Advisory Committee which studied the issue throughout the province. The Committee was of the opinion that information, policy and programming in relation to literacy in B.C. Corrections was lacking.

As a result of the foregoing, The John Howard Society of B.C. developed a proposal to research the literacy experiences of those serving sentences in Provincial jails.

The end product of this research is ***"Opening Minds Behind Closed Doors: Literacy in B.C. Corrections."***

The journey that you are about to undergo could not have been made possible without the supreme effort of many individuals and organizations. On behalf of The John Howard Society of B.C., I would like to thank those who contributed financially to the project as listed on the front cover. Special appreciation must go to the men and women of the B.C. Corrections Branch for their openness to the project and their co-operation with Audrey on her visits to the jails. Research of this nature could not have been made possible without the full co-operation of the men and women prisoners who volunteered to be interviewed. Thank you very much for your time and for your honesty. It was not an easy task!

The drafting of this research document has been an arduous endeavour which was made much easier by the word-processing skills and the patience of Patricia Blondé. Thank you to Patricia and the children who put up with this extra load.

Finally, I would like to express my greatest appreciation to Audrey Thomas. Audrey is known throughout Canada for her work in the Literacy movement. We have been very fortunate to have her as our researcher. Audrey spent many, many hours travelling the highways and airways to meet with the men and women who were interviewed. She performed this task with some trepidation, but also with a sense of

commitment and compassion.

Let me end these remarks by expressing the commitment of the John Howard Society to those persons incarcerated in B.C. correction centres to follow up the recommendations of this report. They will not gather dust. I am already talking to some individuals about some aspects of the report. It is my sincere hope that this research will assist them in reaching out to take hold of the opportunities to learn and to gain the dignity and self-esteem which that experience will bring and to which every person has the right.

Willie Blondé
Executive Officer
The John Howard Society of B.C.

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As usual, a project of this nature would not have been possible without the interest and cooperation of many individuals. Help was given not only by people in British Columbia, but also by colleagues in Ontario. The study would not have been possible without the financial support of the National Literacy Secretariat, Ministry of the Solicitor-General of Canada, Ministry of Attorney-General, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the logistical support of Camosun College.

Thanks go to B.C. Corrections, Directors and staff who agreed to cooperate with the study and made possible a high rate of responses. Particular thanks must go to all correctional and educational staff who befriended me on my visits to their institutions and who helped with the selection of inmates for interviewing. Particularly helpful were Etta Connor, Trudy Archie, Vivian Bodnar, Linda Forsythe, and Reg MacNamara among academic personnel, and George Harding and Bill Hesketh of the John Howard Societies. Thanks to all others who took time to answer questionnaires or provide additional information by telephone or correspondence. All contributions were vital to the study.

Etta Connor, Barry Lynden, and Rick Schwartz acted as an Advisory Committee to the project along with Willie Blonde, Executive Officer of the John Howard Society of British Columbia. To Willie must go my warmest thanks and

appreciation for his support, patience and encouragement throughout the project. To his wife, Patricia, thanks are due for her patient and efficient logistical support. Finally, thanks to my family for living through yet another hectic project!

Audrey Thomas
Victoria, 1992

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project was designed to determine the experiences of offenders in adult correctional facilities in the province in relation to their literacy needs, and to discover where and how those needs were being met. Recommendations for future action in relation to literacy programs were also to be made.

The five month project started in December, 1991 and finished in May, 1992. Information was gathered through designing a series of questionnaires and sending them to Directors of Correctional Centres in B.C., Adult Basic Education (ABE) Administrators with responsibility for educational contracts in B.C. Corrections, academic instructors and life skills coaches, halfway agencies, and community literacy groups. The overall response rate was 69 percent. In addition, 78 inmates were interviewed in 9 adult facilities (secure and open) across the province. Sixty-eight of the inmates were male and the remaining 10 were female. Fifty-six of the inmates interviewed were not participating in education programs in the facilities at the time of the interview; 22 of the inmates were participants in the programs. Interviews were one-on-one and lasted for about one hour. During that time, inmate nonparticipants (Non Ps) were asked to do some reading and writing for the researcher. Participants (Ps) were asked questions related to their program experience.

Fifteen of 17 secure and open facilities offer ABE

programs. Vancouver Pre-Trial Services Centre and Hutda Lake CC are the two centres which do not offer programs at this time. VSPC has recognized a need for ESL training and Hutda Lake has identified literacy and academic upgrading leading to GED as required. Space is a problem in VSPC, but Hutda Lake has an empty cabin which could be used as a school. Its problem is its isolation from Prince George, but other isolated centres offer ABE programs.

Some programs do not offer literacy training below the Grade 8 level, and one institution does not offer programs to protective custody inmates. Typically, instructors operate a one-room school and try to cater to a variety of language, literacy, numeracy and other educational needs to a population at different levels of academic attainment and ability. Only one or two people with basic literacy needs can be handled in class. The extra care and attention these students need cannot be accommodated without ignoring and alienating other students. To handle these people, tutorial help is required. Several programs have started to use volunteer tutors from the community as well as inmate or peer tutors. Currently, there is no established program funding for these efforts. Three "pilot" projects underway this year are funded through the federal-provincial literacy cost-shared project funds. They are not eligible for continued funding through this channel. Yet, of a suggested list of 10 learning arrangements, 61 percent of Inmate Non Ps favoured community tutors, and all Inmate Ps thought

community tutors would be helpful. Community tutors ranked first for Inmate Non Ps among all suggested arrangements. Use of inmate tutors ranked fourth after working with an instructor (2nd place) and working on own in living unit (3rd place).

The overall grade level of educational attainment in the inmate interview sample was 7.5. Twenty-six percent of the sample had Grade 6 completion or less. Thirty-two percent of Inmate Non Ps either did not read or read at below a Grade 6 level and a further 36 percent read at between a Grade 7 and Grade 8 level. The majority of inmates did not like school; many had a history of repeating grades, getting into trouble and being kicked out. Writing, spelling and math were identified as weaknesses by many inmates. The majority of Inmate Non Ps said they had difficulty with division, fractions and most other math. Math was the subject or skill area most often quoted as being the area which inmates hoped to improve or needed to improve. When they need help with reading or writing, a high proportion of the interview sample indicated they asked other inmates for help. This should strengthen arguments for the use of inmate tutors.

All inmates felt strongly that education programs should be offered in all correctional centres. Inmate participants also felt the school hours should be expanded and more teachers and subjects should be offered. Most Regions have some kind of computer component in their

education programs. The exception is the Fraser Region. Most inmate participants felt positively about their school experience while incarcerated and felt better about themselves. Inmates had many suggestions for additional educational activities. Trades training was strongly requested, or courses and certification related to that which would be useful on the outside. More creative and cultural activities were also requested. In addition, there appear to be strong needs for vocational and educational information and counselling especially prior to release. Instructors would also like to see programs expanded and Directors indicated that if funds were available, programs could be expanded.

Most respondents in all groups were not in favour of mandatory educational assessments or attendance. However, inmates felt that assessments should be available for those who wanted them, even if they did not intend going to the prison education program. An important finding was that the lowest educated group in the inmate sample, many of whom were Natives, favoured mandatory assessments upon being incarcerated for the first time and favoured mandatory attendance for those with low education or literacy and numeracy difficulties. This could be interpreted as a plea for help. The mandatory nature would provide a cover for this group who would probably find it difficult, otherwise, to ask for help.

Most respondents favoured incentives which were usually

translated in terms of pay for attending school at the same rate as work pay. There are discrepancies in inmate pay policies throughout the province. There are also discrepancies in terms of instructional contracts and some institutions do not offer year-round programming. Those that do, do so on part-time contracts. Instructors generally receive little or no training geared to Corrections before they start their work on the inside, nor are there opportunities for them to come together to network as a group or have professional development activities related to Corrections and correctional education. Instructors want these opportunities. They are generally isolated in their educational work, although many stressed that they have cordial and cooperative relationships with correctional staff.

A literacy environment can be encouraged through the use of library services, and provision of materials to living units or dorms. Again, there are discrepancies across the province in the provision of these services. Books can become an inmate's best friend on the inside. Most inmates read or look at magazines and newspapers. More can be done to improve these services.

B.C. Corrections Branch views education as a constructive activity for the incarcerated, but there are hardly any standards developed for delivery of educational and cultural activities in the adult correctional centres. All inmates should have the right to participate in

education programs while incarcerated. There should then be an equitable distribution of resources and program opportunities in all regions of the province. B.C. Corrections needs to be more proactive about education if it truly sees education as an important factor in rehabilitation. Most respondents were in favour of having a designated person at a sufficiently senior level within the Corrections Branch to provide vision, leadership and a facilitating role in the setting of standards and coordinating of activities.

Literacy is the cornerstone or foundation of learning. Inmates with low literacy abilities and inmates with language difficulties cannot begin to access other educational opportunities. They will forever remain behind closed doors unless someone can turn the key to open their minds to new possibilities. Inmates who are a little further along the literacy continuum also need to improve their skills. Education is certainly a constructive activity and the current state of affairs in B.C. Corrections is not as dismal as was previously imagined. However, much more can and should be done. It is in the spirit of trying to provide the best service possible that the following recommendations have been made.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

1. B.C. Corrections Branch more clearly define and state its policy concerning (a) the role and relative importance of education in prison;

(b) inmates right to learn; (c) educational aims and priorities.

2. B.C. Corrections Branch embark on the development of standards for educational program activity and cultural activities for all institutions in the province so that equitable arrangements may be put in place in all regions.

3. B.C. Corrections Branch designate staff at a senior level to advise on, give leadership to, and advocate for education programs in correctional institutions in the province.

4. B.C. Corrections Branch, through designated personnel, work cooperatively with other B.C. Ministries, notably the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, and the Library Services Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture, for the purpose of enhancing and further developing educational and cultural programs in correctional institutions in the province.

5. B.C. Corrections Branch take initiative to provide and support training and professional development opportunities for all instructors working in its institutions as well as for front-line correctional staff in relation to educational programs and issues concerning inmates and corrections.

6. B.C. Corrections Branch reconsider its policy on

non-provision of vocational training and investigate how some trades training with suitable accreditation could be implemented for inmates in the province. The experience of other provinces especially Ontario should be examined in this regard.

7. B.C. Corrections Branch review the pay policies in place in the various institutions for those attending educational programs and strive for equity across the province. In particular, serious consideration be given to treating school attendance as work for pay purposes.

8. B.C. Corrections ensure that sufficient funds are available in all regions of the province to provide programs on a year-round basis according to need and demand and with regard to equitable distribution of program opportunities, facilities and equipment.

9. Correctional and educational staff work closely together in each of the institutions to devise strategies for detecting adults with low literacy skills and for encouraging them to participate in a suitable learning arrangement while incarcerated.

10. That all program options available to inmates be clearly explained to them upon intake or soon after, with special measures being undertaken to ensure that immigrants whose first language is not English

and low-literate adults understand the options available.

11. a) Correctional staff work with educational staff to encourage and support the training and use of inmate (peer) tutors and community tutors for prison education programs.

    b) B.C. Corrections recognize the merits and advantages of tutorial arrangements and financially support such efforts as a viable program option.

12. Correctional staff and educational staff work together to plan educational and cultural activities of a short-term nature such as workshops on a regular basis in their institutions.

13. Correctional staff and educational staff work together to devise ways for improving educational information and counselling sessions especially prior to inmate release and to work with community agencies to improve bridging and transitions back into the community.

14. Correctional staff and educational staff work together to provide some kind of valid recognition for the educational and work achievements accomplished by inmates while incarcerated.

15. Correctional and educational staff seriously investigate ways for eliminating fees and purchase of books for correspondence courses and other "open learning" situations, in order to encourage

participation in alternative educational options which inmates carry over on release.

16. Correctional staff consult with educational staff before transferring an inmate who is in the school program and making progress in order to minimize disruptions in that progress.

17. Correctional staff seriously consider and request implementation of Life Skills or similar kinds of courses in institutions where these are not offered.

18. Correctional staff, educational staff, and community agencies work together to provide more community contacts and mentoring type relationships in general.

19. Correctional staff take the necessary steps to improve library services in all institutions by: a) designating a librarian in each institution which does not have one. (Responsible inmates and community agencies could be approached to provide such services. Consideration should also be given to separating the library functions from the instructional function where these are combined.); b) cataloguing collections where this has not been done; c) improving reference collections; d) acquiring a basic literacy collection for low-literate adults; e) building up collections generally, especially in relation to "how to" manuals and texts; f) improving magazine collections, especially obtaining more current copies of popular magazines

such as "National Geographic"; g) extending library privileges for inmates either through more frequent visits, or more books borrowed per visit.

20. Correctional staff implement the following measures in all living units or dorms: a) provision of dictionaries for easy access and reference by inmates; b) provision of other basic reference material such as atlases and encyclopedias where possible; c) provision of at least two copies of a daily provincial or national newspaper in addition to any local daily or weekly paper published in the community of the institution.

1. INTRODUCTION

The John Howard Society of British Columbia - a federation of eight regional John Howard Societies around the province - submitted a research proposal to find out more about the literacy situation in provincial adult and youth correctional facilities. The proposal was prompted by a recommendation made in 1989 to the Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the B.C. Solicitor-General by the Provincial Literacy Advisory Committee. Recommendation 25 of the Committee's Report called for the two Ministers "to cooperatively plan and deliver literacy and upgrading programs within all correctional institutions and halfway houses in the province." The recommendation was based on the reported high rates of illiteracy within inmate populations and the lack of any overall provincial policy for literacy programming within adult correctional facilities and in post-release situations. The need was demonstrated more grapnically in the spring of 1991 when seven proposals for literacy initiatives in correctional or post-release settings in British Columbia were submitted for federal-provincial cost-shared funds. Four of these were funded for 1991-92 in addition to this research project.

The objectives of the project were as follows:

(1) To determine the experiences of offenders in provincial correctional facilities in relation

to literacy needs;

(2) To discover where these needs are being met and where they are not;

(3) To compile information on what kinds of literacy programs could be made available in provincial correctional facilities and in post-release situations; and,

(4) To make recommendations for future action in relation to literacy programs.

After some discussion, it was decided to focus on adult facilities only, as education has to be provided in youth institutions for people up to the age of fifteen years. This is usually done through local school districts.

2. PROCEDURES

PRELIMINARY STEPS

A small advisory group was struck. Its members included representatives of the John Howard Society of B. C., the B. C. Ministry of the Attorney-General, and the ABE Instructor at the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre. The researcher met with the group as a whole and separately to obtain further information about corrections in the province. A letter asking for their co-operation was sent from the B.C. Ministry of the Attorney-General to all the Directors of adult correctional facilities in the province. The Executive Officer of the John Howard Society of B.C., and the researcher were invited to a meeting of the Directors of adult correctional facilities in December 1991 to explain the project and get some feedback from them on the research plan.

An up-to-date listing of literacy/ABE programs in provincial correctional facilities was obtained from the Adult Literacy Contact Centre in Vancouver, and the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) in London, Ontario, was contacted for information about literacy programs in correctional settings in other provinces. The researcher also conducted a literature search through ERIC and browsed through relevant microfiches and journal articles. The majority of the literature, however, is U.S.-based and not always applicable to the Canadian scene.

The research plan called for visits to be made to selected institutions. The advisory group helped to identify institutions and the researcher followed up with preliminary phone calls to instructors in those institutions around the feasibility of visits and procedures for interviewing inmates participating in literacy programs and inmate nonparticipants. Information about programs in other jurisdictions was also requested through telephone conversations and correspondence.

THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires were developed during the month of January. These instruments were the primary method of data collection for non-inmates. Five questionnaires were developed: one for the Directors of adult correctional facilities; one for the college ABE or prison education coordinators with responsibility for the program(s) in correctional facilities; one for the literacy/ABE instructors; one for the halfway community agencies such as the John Howard Societies and the Elizabeth Fry Societies; and, one for the community Project Literacy groups. In addition, two questionnaires or interview schedules were developed for inmates: one for participants in educational programs; one for nonparticipants.

All questionnaire instruments were reviewed by the advisory group and some adjustments were made. Covering letters were composed and mailed with the relevant

questionnaire. Letters to the Directors of correctional facilities which were going to be visited included the dates of the visit and the number of inmate participants and non-participants to be interviewed. Follow-up telephone calls confirmed the convenience of the dates and procedure to be followed upon arrival at the correctional facility. The number of questionnaires mailed in each category and the response rate is shown in Table 1. The overall response rate was 69 percent.

TABLE 1. Number of Questionnaires Mailed and Responses

Category	Number		Response Rate (%)
	Mailed	Responses	
Directors of Adult Correctional Facilities	20	17	85
College ABE/Prison Education Coordinators	6	6	100
ABE Instructors in B.C. Corrections (includes 3 Life Skills Instructors)	16	13	81
Community Halfway Agencies	13	9	69
Community Project Literacy Groups	20	7	35
TOTAL	75	52	69

CORRECTIONAL SITES AND SAMPLE

In order to obtain information about the literacy needs and experiences of inmates it was deemed essential to interview inmates with low levels of education who were not participating in the prison education program as well as to interview a small sample who were participating in education programs. The sample was to be drawn from all the correctional regions of the province, and from a variety of facilities.

At the present time, there are 20 adult correctional facilities operated and staffed in British Columbia by the Corrections Branch, Ministry of the Attorney-General. The province is divided into five regions: Vancouver Island, Vancouver Metro, Fraser, Interior, and Northern. Of the 20 facilities or centres, two are in Vancouver Island Region, five are in Vancouver Metro, seven are in the Fraser Region, and there are three each in the Interior and Northern Regions.

Correctional centres belong to one of three types: secure, open, or community. Each region has at least one secure centre and one open. Secure centres hold inmates who have been remanded in custody pending trial or sentence, and/or sentenced inmates who have been deemed to require secure placement. Where possible, remanded and sentenced inmates are housed separately - either in a specially designed secure pretrial centre, or in separate living units

within a secure centre. In British Columbia, there are six secure units for men and one for women.

Open correctional centres usually house the largest proportion of sentenced inmates (about 50 percent). There are nine of these for men in British Columbia and one for women. Of the nine for the male population, four provide special services; the other five are for the general population. Open centres are usually work camps - often associated with forestry, farming, or other outdoor activities.

Three of the 20 centres are community correctional centres which house small numbers of people, many of whom are on temporary absences and work in the community. There is one community correctional centre in each of the following regions: Vancouver Metro, Fraser Region, Northern Region. These centres were not visited for the purposes of this project.

Many of the open facilities are in relatively isolated locations and, on the average, house about 60 inmates. The secure institutions, on the other hand, are in, or close to, major urban centres and average about 160 inmates. It was suggested that the researcher visit the four secure male institutions which were not pre-trial centres, as well as three open facilities for men. As there are only two correctional facilities for women and both are in the same location, they were both visited. Appendix A gives a

listing of all 20 correctional facilities in the province, and Table 2 shows the facilities visited for purposes of interviewing inmates.

Interview Sample

Sampling presented some practical problems:

1. It appears there are no easily retrievable records on levels of education of inmates from a central source. On intake, inmates are asked about their level of education and this is noted in their files. Many correctional staff feel that the declared level of education is often suspect. It is socially acceptable to say "Grade 10" but there is no way to verify this statement.
2. Random sampling could not be used because the population with low grade levels was not known. As the objectives of the study were literacy-related, a random sample of the total population would have produced people with post-secondary education - a group that was not the target of the study. A further disadvantage of the random approach would be the element of compliance with the study: Unwilling subjects would not be good interviewees.
3. In provincial correctional facilities there is a fair amount of movement. People are transferred in and out of and between institutions for various reasons: remand, sentences, classification,

pre-release, overcrowding, security/control problems. Stays in provincial institutions are short. Two years less a day is the maximum sentence for provincial correctional facilities. Inmates are eligible for parole after serving one-third of their sentence and are usually discharged after serving two-thirds of their sentence unless they have lost some remission time. The average stay in provincial institutions is only a few months.

These practical difficulties meant that another strategy had to be used for identifying possible interviewees. Conversations with instructors had revealed that the average class size in prison was about ten inmates. Inmates attending prison school usually are working towards their GED. It was felt that two inmates from each school program visited would be enough. The request was for people working at the literacy or Fundamental level of ABE. If that request could not be met, people at the lowest levels in the class were asked to be participants. In some cases, the names of two people were picked out of a hat!

The strategy for choosing nonparticipants varied with the institutions. In some cases, the instructors worked with living unit officers to help identify possible candidates. In others, the program officers or classification officers were charged with finding possible

interviewees. In some institutions, posters or notices were placed on living unit bulletin boards asking for volunteers. Inmates in class also helped identify possible interviewees. A pay "incentive" was offered in one institution. In some of the institutions, volunteer tutoring programs were already in operation or about to begin, so there was some awareness about a literacy initiative. This may have made it easier for some people to volunteer for the interview.

The number of nonparticipants asked for was calculated as follows. It was assumed that 75 percent of the inmate population had less than Grade 10 level of education. This does not seem an unreasonable assumption from rough estimates of those involved in the system, nor from the reading of correctional-related literature. This percentage may even be overly generous, as one program officer said that when he surveyed educational levels of inmates in his institution some time ago, 85 percent had Grade 7 or less.

It was felt that a valid sample spread across the system would be between 5 to 10 percent. Working from a statistical sheet showing a breakdown of the inmate count in institutions in October, 1991, the researcher took 75 percent of the number of sentenced inmates and then 10 percent of that number. The total regular capacity of the adult correctional system is about 1800 inmates. The number of sentenced inmates in October was 1459. Seventy-five percent of this number is 1095. A sample size of anywhere

from 55 to 110 inmates was therefore required. Table 2 shows the visitation schedule and the number of participants and nonparticipants requested.

TABLE 2. Visitation Sites and Numbers of Participants (Ps) and Nonparticipants (NPs) to be Interviewed, January-March, 1992.

Adult Facility	Number	
	Ps	NPs
Vancouver Island R.C.C.	2	9-10
Nanaimo R.C.C.	2	6
Burnaby C.C.W. - secure	2	5
- open	2	2
Mt. Thurston C.C.	2	4
Fraser R.C.C	2	18-20
Kamloops R.C.C.	2	8-9
Rayleigh C.C.	2	4
Prince George R.C.C.	2	8-9
TOTALS	18	64-69

VISIT SCHEDULE

The inmate interview process was started in the last week of January in the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre. It was estimated that each interview

would take about one hour. As part of the process, inmates were asked to do some reading and writing. Enough time had to be spent in establishing rapport and making the inmate feel comfortable before asking him (or her) to do the reading and writing. Time is quite neatly defined in blocks in the correctional setting. There are lock-down periods in secure institutions. People in protective custody need escorts around the building. Inmates may have to be frisked. It takes time to get through the various locked parts of the building. For all these reasons, the average number of interviews per day was five or six. The researcher planned to stay two or three days in each location, unless it was a small facility and a one-day visit was sufficient.

The interviews at Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre were seen as a field test. Some minor adjustments were made to the questionnaires and interview process. Visits to other centres were confirmed and travel arrangements made accordingly. The out-of-town visits began in Nanaimo on February 10th, and finished in Prince George on March 3rd. A second visit was made to the Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women (secure) also in the first week of March. The interviews took place in interview rooms or offices in living units, in visiting areas, in the schoolroom, in the library, or some other suitable place in the facility where the researcher could be alone with the

interviewee. If inmates were allowed to smoke and wanted to do so, the researcher let them smoke to make them feel comfortable. In some cases, the researcher returned after the dinner period, which occurs in the late afternoon, to continue interviewing. In the Nanaimo Centre most of the interviewing was done at night.

During the visits, the researcher also touched bases with agencies and colleges involved in setting up new services through the 1991-1992 cost-shared projects. In this connection, the researcher attended an evening tutor-training session at the Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women; she visited and spoke with the prison education coordinator and tutor-trainer at the University College of the Fraser Valley; she met with the Executive Director of the Kamloops Elizabeth Fry Society whose agency will also be training tutors for the two correctional centres in Kamloops; and finally, she visited Howard House in Vernon, the site of an intended post-release literacy program for resistant learners.

All these visits were essential to a better understanding of the situation in adult provincial correctional facilities in British Columbia. The balance of this report will try to depict that situation with special reference to literacy abilities, needs, and activities.

3. THE CURRENT EDUCATIONAL SITUATION IN B.C. CORRECTIONS

BELIEFS, GOALS AND STRATEGIES OF B.C. CORRECTIONS BRANCH

Mission

"The Corrections Branch is an integral component of British Columbia's comprehensive justice system. The mission of the branch is to provide the various levels of intervention, security, control, and/or supervision required by that system." (Ministry of Attorney-General, May, 1986, p. 3). The branch recognizes five objectives inherent in the discharge of its mandate, two of which have direct implications for educational services:

> "provision of positive and constructive activities for offenders in custody or on probation supervision; and
>
> assistance to sentenced offenders to re-establish themselves in the community following release from custody."

Beliefs

In the administration of sentences imposed by court orders, the branch recognizes the traditional sentencing principles of: retribution, rehabilitation, deterrence, incapacitation, and deprivation. Educational programs fit within the principle of rehabilitation. However, the branch believes that "offenders should not receive more rights and opportunities than those generally available to other

members of society" (Ministry of Attorney-General, May, 1986, p. 7, #16). Thus, programs "are not intended to provide opportunities that exceed those generally available to citizens in the community...the branch does not provide vocational training" (Ministry of the Attorney-General, May, 1986, p. 6).

Strategies and Standards

Nevertheless, under the strategy of imprisonment, the branch provides "opportunities for inmate work, education, recreation, life-skills and spiritual development that:

a) encourage responsible personal decision-making; and

b) contribute positively to the individual's quality of life, to the branch, and to the community" (Ministry of the Attorney-General, May, 1986, p. 10).

In the Correctional Centre Rules and Regulations, 1986, clause 45 on "Work, Recreation, and Educational Opportunities" reads as follows:

> 45.(1) A director shall provide a program of work and recreation for all inmates who are serving a sentence at his correctional centre.
>
> (2) The director shall, insofar as practical, ensure that reasonable facilities are provided to interest and assist inmates to improve their level of education or training.

The Corrections Branch Service Delivery Standards for inmate work, education and recreation programs make no

mention of educational facilities. Education is mentioned in the Service Delivery Standards for Youth Programs (see Appendix B).

CURRENT SITUATION IN THE REGIONS

Vancouver Island

An educational program has been provided in the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre (VIRCC) under contract with Camosun College for seven years. There is one academic instructor who works all year with the month of June for vacation. The contract calls for 1300 hours of work a year. This includes 20 hours of teaching contact time per week, the balance of the time is spent on looking after the libraries and in counselling inmates and in carrying out related educational duties.

There are two separate schools in VIRCC, one for the general population and one for the population in protective custody. Each is housed in the buildings designated for these populations. The libraries are also separate. The recreational library space for the general population is in the same space as the school for that population. The recreational library for the protective custody population is in a small room across the hall from the protective custody schoolroom.

The school for the general population can accommodate about 15 inmates, while the school for the protective custody inmates will house about six inmates. Volunteer

tutors are used to help the instructor. At the time of the project, eight community tutors were being used as well as two inmate tutors. Volunteers have been used for over four years. They work under the supervision of the instructor and help students at a variety of levels. Most of the students at VIRCC work at the Intermediate ABE Level and higher.

Two different strategies have been used to try to service inmates needing basic literacy skills. Firstly, the BLADE program was purchased in 1990 and a workshop was held for the local educational community to orient them to its use. BLADE was developed with federal funds as part of the Saskatchewan New Start Program in the early 1970s. The acronym stands for Basic Literacy for Adult Development. BLADE is an individualized program based on a spiral curriculum plan which will take students to a Grade 5 level in reading, communication and mathematics. It uses audiotapes, workbooks, and study sheets as part of its approach. The tape-text combination and a phonetically based cueing system are the two most unique features of the Program. The student is responsible for his own learning process and for assessing his own performance. The instructor acts as a facilitator and encourager. BLADE is fairly widely used in Ontario Correctional Centres.

The second strategy tried by VIRCC in conjunction with the John Howard Society of Victoria was to train literacy

volunteers to work in VIRCC in the spring of 1991. No funds could be found to continue the coordination and continued training of volunteers by a person other than the academic instructor. The latter thus has these duties added to her other duties.

The Nanaimo Correctional Centre (Nanaimo CC) contracts with a private instructor for 12.5 hours of teaching time a week throughout the year. Two and one-half hours a week are for literacy assessments and matching inmates with volunteer tutors. The remaining ten hours are for academic upgrading leading to the GED. The volunteer tutor program at Nanaimo was started in 1990 by the Nanaimo Region John Howard Society. The training of tutors is done by the instructor. The initial training takes 17 hours and is spread over one month. At the time of the project, nine community tutors and three inmate tutors were being used. The Nanaimo Region John Howard Society provides inmate counselling services, and a counsellor from Malaspina College also helps with transitions between the institutions.

As the Nanaimo CC is an open facility, it is primarily a work group. Inmates interested in school attend in the evenings. The classroom is always open for student use, even when the instructor is not present. The class has a capacity to hold 14 students at any one time. A class list of about 50 names is usual. Anyone who makes contact with the instructor goes on the list. Some want information,

others want help with correspondence courses, some are waiting to try college entrance tests. Of the 30 or so who are regularly tutored or came to class, about one-quarter are at the Literacy/Fundamental ABE Level. About two-thirds are working towards Grade 12 completion or are preparing to write the GED. The rest are at the Intermediate ABE Level.

Vancouver Metro Region

The Vancouver Pre-Trial Services Centre does not offer any educational programs. The reasons given were: high turnover of inmates, and Centre not resourced for such programs.

Since January 1992, the New Haven Correctional Centre has contracted with the B.C. Borstal Association to provide through two instructors, adult basic education three evenings a week, and Life Skills. Attendance in these programs is compulsory. Tutoring is available for Special Needs students by a qualified instructor. New Haven is based on Borstal concepts for young male offenders between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three years.

The Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women (BCCW) has school programs in both the Secure Unit and the Open Living Unit. BCCW moved into new faciliites in the spring of 1991. Douglas college continues to provide the educational programs for female inmates as it did with BCCW's predecessor (Lakeside Women's CC) from 1981 to 1991. At the time of this study, there were three full-time instructors.

Two are tenured faculty at Douglas College and the third instructor is on contract. There are two full-time positions for the Secure Unit, and a part-time position for the Open Living Unit. The instructor in the Open Living Unit also has the responsibility for the training and supervision of the tutor-training program which is underway this year.

Both schools operate for ten months from September to June inclusive. The Secure Unit is the larger of the two and also holds federal women prisoners. There is a large, pleasant classroom space where two of the instructors work and a fairly large separate library close to the school. The Open Living Unit is smaller but a very high proportion of the women are involved in the school program. These women may be serving provincial or federal sentences. In addition, women can attend college or other courses on temporary absence passes. Programs are offered from basic literacy and ESL tutoring through academic upgrading and GED preparation to post-secondary correspondence courses. Two inmate tutors have been tutoring for two years. The school in the Secure Unit can handle 16 students at any one time, while the school in the Open Living Unit handles between ten to twelve. Both schools have computers in use. In January 1992, under the federal-provincial cost-shared funding for literacy projects, a community tutor training program was started. Eighteen tutors were trained over an eight-week

period for a total of 20 hours. Many began tutoring at the beginning of March.

The Marpole Community Correctional Centre provides educational release to the community via approved temporary absences.

Fraser Valley

The University College of the Fraser Valley entered into a contract with the Corrections Branch to provide educational, counselling and other services in the region in September 1990. There are three academic instructors: one is attached to Fraser Regional Correctional Centre (FRCC) on a full-time basis - 24 hours of teaching contact time; another instructor serves four open and special institutions - three hours a week at Stave Lake Correctional Centre (SLCC), six hours a week at Alouette River Correctional Centre (ARCC), six hours a week at Ford Mountain Correctional Centre (FMCC), and nine hours a week at Mount Thurston Correctional Centre (MTCC); the third instructor works at Surrey Pre-Trial Services Centre (SPSC). The latter institution provided twelve hours of instruction to inmates from September to December, 1991 - six hours for the general population, and six hours for the protective custody population. The class sessions were doubled from January to March, 1992 to provide four days of three hours contact time for a total of twelve hours for each group of inmates. The total instructional load was thus twenty-four hours. At

FRCC there are two schools, one for the general population and one for the protective custody population but they both use the same classroom at separately scheduled times.

Of 181 students assessed in the six correctional centres of the Fraser Region between September and December, 1991, 54 percent were found to be functioning below the Grade 8 level (Fundamental ABE), 34 percent below Grade 10 (Intermediate ABE). The higher percentages assessed at the Fundamental ABE Level were in the open facilities; at FRCC which assessed 66 students in the period, 32 percent were at the Fundamental ABE Level and 68 percent were at the Intermediate ABE Level. Included in the Fundamental ABE Level were several English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Vietnamese, Hispanics, and East Indians are showing up in correctional centres.

In order to help the instructors and to meet the needs of low level students, the College applied for and received funding under the federal-provincial cost-shared literacy projects to initiate a tutor-training program using inmate (peer) and community tutors. A part-time tutor-trainer coordinator was hired in October 1991 and training sessions for community tutors and inmate tutors were held at FRCC during the month of November. The total initial training received was 15 hours. This was followed up with in-service workshops on specific topics. After the first training session there were 13 community tutors and 12 inmate tutors

available for tutoring. Nine of the community tutors and seven of the inmate tutors were working at FRCC. Seven ESL students (6 Spanish-speaking, one Cantonese-speaking) had both inmate and community tutors. One or two trained community tutors were working in some of the open settings. Transferred inmate tutors were also able to help out in one of the open centres. A second tutor-training session was held at the end of February. This project has one-time only funding under the cost-shared program.

Three Life Skills Coaches deliver 21 hours of training a week between them in five of the six centres. The one centre which does not currently have Life Skills is Mount Thurston. Life Skills is conducted in a group setting in three hour blocks per session. Inmates can gain credit for completed Life Skills courses from the University College of the Fraser Valley. Two separate courses of 30 hours each can be offered with one and one-half credits for each course. Students get certificates on completion and are eligible for pre-registration at the College because they are already in the system. Some Life Skills courses offer a workshop format rather than a complete course.

The contract with the University College of the Fraser Valley also provides for a part-time (17.5 hours) vocational counsellor to visit each of the correctional centres to provide workshops, information and advice to inmates on career options and related matters. A library technician's

services was also contracted on a part-time basis for the Surrey Pretrial Services Centre. Included in the contract is a part-time Coordinator of Prison Education who is responsible for and supervises all the activities in the correctional centres which are provided for in the contract.

The contract for the Fraser Region is an annual one for a three year period. In fact, because of the fiscal year end and flow of funds, college staff are contracted for a seven month period - September to the end of March. They are then on interim contracts for three months until the end of June. The cycle begins again in September. There is a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity among instructors and coaches associated with this arrangement.

Interior Region

The University College of the Cariboo has a contract to provide educational programs in the three adult correctional centres in the Interior Region on the basis of 15 hours a week for 12 months of the year. There is one academic instructor at each institution: Kamloops Regional Correctional Centre (KRCC); Rayleigh Correctional Centre (RCC); and Bear Creek Correctional Centre (BCCC). The instructor at Rayleigh has worked there for three and a half years - since the beginning of the program. The instructors at the other institutions are more recent, having worked for 13 months and 10 months at their respective institutions.

In the Interior Region, no distinction is made between

"general population," and "protective custody" inmates, so there are no separate schools. At KRCC the school serves inmates who are above the Fundamental ABE Level. It offers academic upgrading from Grade 8 through to Grade 12 completion and/or GED preparation. In the spring of 1992, the Kamloops and District Elizabeth Fry Society which has a tradition of working at KRCC, received federal-provincial cost-shared literacy funds to initiate a tutor-training program to serve KRCC and RCC. (BCCC is more isolated and not part of the Kamloops area.) There are people with basic literacy needs in both these centres.

In RCC the instructor offers basic literacy and ESL training, as well as the range of academic upgrading and GED preparation. BCCC also offers the spectrum of upgrading although most inmates in school are usually at the Intermediate ABE Level or higher.

Northern Region

The Prince George Regional Correctional Centre (PGRCC) contracts with the College of New Caledonia (CNC) to provide GED upgrading and correspondence course help for seven months of the year. The College has provided educational services for 12 years to PGRCC. There is one full-time academic instructor and one part-time aide who works 20 hours a week. Inmates working at the Fundamental ABE Level are accepted into the school. In PGRCC, inmates in protective custody do not attend the school. PGRCC is an

old facility and space is at a premium. The school can take 12-13 inmates. It is located in the basement and the equipment is old. A new facility is planned in the near future.

Some tentative efforts at providing a tutorial literacy service have been made in Prince George. In the summer of 1990 a university student who was home for the summer offered to help men with literacy needs in PGRCC. Three men were tutored during this period and another one came forward, but the load was too heavy for the student. When the student returned to university, the father continued tutoring two of the men during the winter of 1990-91. A student from CNC tutored one inmate in the spring and summer of 1991. An application for funds to develop and expand the tutor-training program for PGRCC under the federal-provincial cost-shared literacy projects was not successful. The coordinator of CNC's volunteer tutor program (VALT) has assessed some inmates who requested one-to-one tutorial help and two men were being tutored by a VALT volunteer at the time of the project.

There is currently no educational program at Hutda Lake Correctional Centre. The Director of the Centre says there is a need for literacy tutoring and there is a vacant log cabin which could be used. The problem is that the Centre is 25 miles from Prince George and it is difficult to attract people when there is no money to pay for gas and

time. CNC did offer a program in the past, but travel time had to be paid for and this cut into the limited instructional time available. CNC instructors may visit the camp occasionally to visit students who are transferred from PGRCC to the camp and who continue working on their studies.

Terrace Community Correctional Centre is starting to offer volunteer one-to-one tutoring through Project Literacy Terrace. Space is a problem but a new centre is planned. Inmates can enrol in ABE at Northwest Community College on approved temporary absences.

Summary

Educational programs are offered in all secure and open correctional centres except Vancouver Pretrial Services Centre (VPSS) and Hutda Lake Correctional Centre. Two of the regions - Fraser and Interior - have a coordinated approach to serving the adult institutions in their regions through contracts with the University of the Fraser Valley and the University College of the Cariboo respectively. Three institutions in three other regions have had long-standing arrangements with their local community college - VIRCC for 7 years with Camosun College, BCCW (and its predecessor) for 10 years with Douglas College, and PGRCC for 12 years with the College of New Caledonia. In addition, New Haven CC in the Vancouver Metro Region has a contract arrangement with the B.C. Borstal Association and Nanaimo Correctional Centre in the Vancouver Island Region

has a contract with a private instructor.

A careful reading of the descriptions presented above reveals some idiosyncrasies in each of the regions. One noteworthy development is the extent to which volunteer tutors (community or inmate) have been or are being used in the programs. Volunteer use appears to be established at VIRCC and Nanaimo CC and volunteers are being successfully introduced in FRCC and BCCW. The intent is to have volunteers in the Interior Region and the need has been demonstrated in the Northern Region. The John Howard Societies in Nanaimo, Victoria, and Prince George have played crucial or facilitating roles in the development of volunteer services and the Elizabeth Fry Society is playing the role in Kamloops. In BCCW and the Fraser Region it is the colleges who have taken the lead role in developing the services. The one-time funding nature of these tutorial projects, however, places them in jeopardy.

Discrepancies exist in the regions in the following areas:

- treatment of general inmate population and protective custody inmates;
- offering of school during daytime in some work camps or open settings, but only after work in others;
- use of computers - none existed in the Fraser Region at the time of the researcher's visits,

but other Regions had computers and inmates were exposed to computer literacy skills and programs;

- provision of educational/vocational counselling services;
- provision of Life Skills courses;
- use of inmate (peer) tutors;
- entry levels of school programs;
- pay policies - some inmates get paid if they go to school, some do not; rates of pay also differ in different schools.

4. FINDINGS - EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES, ABILITIES AND NEEDS OF INMATES

COMPOSITION OF INMATE INTERVIEW SAMPLE

Numbers of Participants and Nonparticipants

Table 2 in chapter 2 of this report indicated the numbers of inmate participants (Ps) and inmate nonparticipants (Non Ps) the researcher hoped to interview. In fact, slightly more participants and slightly fewer nonparticipants than requested were interviewed. After the trial run at VIRCC, the first places visited were Nanaimo CC, BCCW, and Mount Thurston. Apparent breakdowns in communication within the correctional centres about the study, and/or the part-time position of the instructor meant it was difficult to find nonparticipants for the study. Participants were easy to identify and at hand, so these were the people lined up to talk to the researcher. Several nonparticipants were people in fact who had participated in the past or who had a tutor. It was difficult to find the quota of nonparticipants for various reasons. Some of these are outlined in the notes to Table 3 which indicates the make-up of the Interview Sample.

There were 22 participants and 56 nonparticipants for a total interview sample of 78 inmates. There were 10 females in the interview sample and 68 males. It was difficult to find female nonparticipants for the study. One of the Non Ps had been in the program at an earlier time.

TABLE 3. Composition of Inmate Interview Sample (N=78)

Facility	Total Interviewed	Non Ps	Ps	Native	Immigrants	
					Overseas	USA
Male						
VIRCC	12	11	1	6	1	
Nanaimo CC	7	5[a]	2	1		
Mount Thurston CC	7	3	4	1		1
FRCC	18	16[b]	2	4	2	1
KRCC	9	7[b]	2	1	1	
Rayleigh CC	5	3[b]	2			
PGRCC	10	8[b]	2	4		
Sub-totals	68	53	15	17	4	2
Female						
BCCW - Secure	6	2	4[c]	1	1	
BCCW - OLU	4	1	3[d]	3		
Sub-totals	10	3	7	4	1	
TOTAL	78	56	22	21	5[e]	2

31

a
One of the "Non Ps" had a tutor; another had been in the school but dropped out because of depression.

b
"Quotas" of "Non Ps" lower than requested for the following reasons - inmate suddenly transferred (3), inmate in lock-up (1), inmates asleep (2), inmate not in identified location (1), living unit phone not answered (2), last-minute inmate refusal (2).

c
Two of the women had federal sentences.

d
In the open living unit, there is a high degree of participation in the school program, one woman was a federal prisoner.

e
All five immigrants in this sample were from Asia.

TABLE 4. Total Inmate Interview Sample by Age Group (N=78)

Facility	18-25 yrs.[a]	26-40 yrs.	41-55 yrs.	over 55 yrs[b]	
Male					
VIRCC	9	2	1		12
Nanaimo CC	3	2	1	1	7
Mount Thurston	3	2	2		7
FRCC	8	10			18
KRCC	6	3			9
Rayleigh	2	2		1	5
PGRCC	5	1	4		10
Sub-totals	36	22	8	2	68
Female					
BCCW - Secure	2	3	1		6
- OLU	1	2		1	4
Sub-totals	3	5	1	1	10
TOTAL	39	27	9	3	78

58

58

[a] At least three inmates in this age group had been transferred from juvenile facilities to finish their sentences.

[b] The oldest inmate interviewed was 69 years old.

TABLE 5. Participant Inmate Interview Sample by Age Group (N=22)

Gender	Total	18-25 yrs.	26-40 yrs.	41-55 yrs.	over 55 ys.
Male	15	8	5	2	
Female	7	2	4	1	
TOTAL	22	10	9	3	

Female participants are over-represented in the sample One of the male participants at Mount Thurston had had post-secondary training, but he was currently in school to obtain help with writing a specific document. He expressed a desire to talk to the researcher, and although he was at a higher level than requested, he was interviewed for his opinions and perspective. Where his obviously high grade level would skew an answer, he is omitted from the sample, but where his answers contributed to the contextual nature of the report, they are included.

After the first week of interviewing, extra caution was taken to recontact the designated liaison people in the correctional institutions, to remind them again of the researcher's visit and the numbers of Ps and Non Ps required for interviews. In the final sample, there were 21 Natives representing 27 percent of the sample. It is common knowledge that there are high proportions of Natives in correctional centres compared to their overall proportion in the dominant society. There were five immigrants from Asia in the sample - two from Vietnam, two from India, one from Hong Kong. Two inmates were born and started their school in the U.S.A.

Age of Inmate Sample

Table 4 shows the composition of the total inmate by age group. Fifty percent were in the 18-25 years group.

Thirty-five percent were in the 26-40 years group. Eleven percent were in the 41-55 years group and four percent were over 55 years of age. Table 5 shows the age breakdown of the smaller participant sample. Most men are in the youngest age group, while most women are in the 26-40 years group. Overall, 45 percent of Ps are in the 18-25 group and 41 percent in the 26-40 years group.

Status and Length of Sentences of Inmate Sample

Of the 78 inmates interviewed, 4 were on remand, 71 were sentenced and 3 were sentenced, but also waiting for another trial. Seventy-one of the inmates interviewed were in the general population, 7 were in protective custody.

Collectively, the inmates had spent 24 years and one month in the institutions in which they were interviewed. The aggregate sentence time excluding the three women with federal sentences was 69 years and 8 months. The average sentence for the 75 inmates serving provincial sentences was 11 months, 4 days. One woman and seven men had sentences of two years less a day. Of the seven men, four were in school programs, and another one hoped to get in, but was on a wait list. An additional man said he would go to pass the time, but was being transferred to camp, and was unsure of his next move.

Of the 68 male inmates, only 10 said it was their first time in jail. Another 7 of the 68 said it was their first

time in an adult facility, but they had been in and out of juvenile centres. Three of the 7 said they had been transferred from juvenile centres. Six of the 10 female inmates said it was their first time in jail and four of the six were attending school programs.

EDUCATIONAL PROFILE OF THE INMATE SAMPLE

Of the 71 inmates in the sample who were not immigrants, most had gone to school in British Columbia. However, 9 had attended schools in Alberta, 6 had attended schools in Ontario, 4 had attended schools in Manitoba, 3 had attended schools in Saskatchewan, and one each had attended schools in Quebec, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland.

International languages partly spoken or understood by some of the inmates included: Bulgarian, Croatian, French, Italian, Norwegian, Swabisch (Low German), Swedish, Ukrainian, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Bengali, Hindi, and Punjabi. Aboriginal languages included: Cree, Carrier, Chilcotin, Sekani, Tahltan, Haida, and Nootka. Very few Native people indicated they were fluent in their ancestral language; typically, they knew or understood some words to communicate with their grandparents. One older Native woman indicated that she taught her language to younger people. Of the five Asiatic immigrants, three indicated they could read and write their first languages. A fourth said he could do "a little" of both reading and writing.

Grade Levels Attained

Table 6 indicates the level of schooling inmates said they had achieved. Typically, there was a pattern of dropping in and out of school and partially completed grades or multiple attempts to achieve a particular level. Inmates were asked to indicate the highest completed grade of schooling.

TABLE 6. Level of Educational Attainment of Inmate Sample

Grade	Number
Less than 5	8[a]
5 to 6	12
7 to 8	29
9 and over	28
TOTAL	77[b]

N=78

a
This number includes two older people who did not go to school at all, and three people who only had a few months schooling. Four of the five were Native, the other one was a Francophone.

b
Participant with post-secondary education is excluded.

TABLE 7. Mean Grade Level of Education of Inmate Sample by Age Group and Participation

Group (N)	18-25 yrs.	26-40 yrs.	41-55 yrs.	Over 55 yrs.	Overall Mean
Non Ps(56)	7.8	8.0	5.3	2.0	7.3
Ps(21)[a]	8.6	7.5	-[a]	-	7.9

[a] Participant with post-secondary education is omitted.

TABLE 8. Level of Education of Inmate Sample by Sex - Ps and Non Ps Combined

Gender (N)	Mode	Median	Mean
Male (67[a])	8	8	7.6
Female (10)	8	n/a	7.1

[a] Participant with post-secondary education is omitted.

The overall mean grade level of 77 interviewees was 7.5 It is interesting to note that the highest mean grade level is in the youngest age group for Ps, but in the second age group (26 to 40 years) for the Non Ps, after that group there is a sharp decline in the level of educational attainment as age increases. This pattern follows patterns established with the general Canadian population.

School Experiences

Table 9 shows the major characteristics of the school experiences of the inmate interview sample.

TABLE 9. Characteristics of School Experiences of Inmate Sample

Experience	Number
Did not attend school or minimal schooling	5
Did not like school	39
Liked school or part of it	24
Neutral, passive about school	10
TOTAL	78
Repeated grades	36
Received special assistance	17
Attended alternate school	13

The question on school experience was open-ended. "What was your school experience like?" Inmates gave honest, off-the-cuff responses. This question was followed with more specific questions about repeating grades, receiving special assistance, school-leaving age and reasons for leaving.

Thirty-nine of the 78 interviewees said they did not like school. Comments made were:

"Not interested in school";

"Not social enough";

"Hated teachers, started skipping grades";

"Not motivated, there were problems with racism";

"No enthusiasm for school";

"A drag";

"I had better things to do";

"It was a place to go, I went because I had to";

"School was irrelevant, because of personal problems";

"I was argumentative; didn't like it after Grade 6";

"I hated math, I was too energetic and started playing hookey";

"I was a fighter and troublemaker and suspended";

"Didn't like it. I became the class clown";

"I was hyper, emotionally disturbed, I walked around class";

"Who likes school?"

In addition, several inmates mentioned that school was

boring. Others said it depended on the teachers. Many inmates said they were "troublemakers", played "hookey", or were "expelled several times." Others said they succumbed to peer pressure and got in with the "wrong crowd."

Twenty-four of the 78 interviewees said they liked school or some aspect of it. Four of the twenty-four were immigrants from Asia. Three of 24 said they liked school until a certain grade - Grade 5, Grade 7, and Grade 9 respectively. Favourite subjects were social studies and physical education (6 mentions each). English, art and science were each mentioned three times. Math was mentioned once. One of the women said she liked the Native language class because only Native students were in that class.

The remaining ten interviewees who had been to school appeared to have more passive school experiences. They made comments such as the following:

"I moved a lot when I was young. I just lived day by day."

"I kind of liked it."

"I was a quiet student. I didn't mind it. I didn't like math. I was in a lot of foster homes - this was unsettling."

"Too may family moves - I was passed because my family was involved in politics. I was spoiled."

"School was difficult and my grandparents couldn't

help me."

"I am dyslexic. It was hard for me to learn. I was in Grade 5 when I found out that I was dyslexic."

"A quiet guy - no ambition."

"Sometimes good, sometimes bad. I didn't get on with the nuns."

"I became lost in secondary school and was too embarrassed to ask for help."

Thirty six of the inmate sample had repeated at least one grade during their school experience. Eleven of the 36 inmates had repeated more than one grade and another 4 of the 36 had repeated the same grade more than once. Table 10 shows the pattern of grades repeated. The number of repeaters and the multiple repeats are indicative of a population with learning and/or personal problems in school. The high number of repeaters in Grade 1 is especially noteworthy. One inmate in the total sample said he had skipped a grade - he went from Grade 2 to Grade 4, but he later got into drugs and drink and ended up in juvenile custody.

TABLE 10. Pattern of Grades Repeated by Inmate Sample

Grade	Numbers of Inmates Repeating once	Numbers of Inmates Repeating More than Once
K	1	
1	10	
2	3[a]	
3	3	1
4	4[a]	
5	3	
6	4	
7	2	
8	6[b]	1
9	5[b]	
10	4	2
n.a.	2[c]	

[a] One inmate each indicated sickness as cause of repeating.

[b] One inmate each indicated moves between cities as cause of repeating.

[c] One inmate said he repeated three grades, but could not remember which ones. Another inmate said he repeated another grade but could not remember which one.

Thirteen of the inmates said they had attended alternate schools and several of them enjoyed the activities and smaller student-teacher ratios. Seventeen of the inmates had been in some form of special learning situation. Five inmates specifically mentioned reading and one mentioned speech as being areas where they had received help. One person had special assistance with math in Grades 8 and 9. Five of the inmates said they were in classes for "slow learners." Others indicated they were in "remedial" or "occupational." Some indicated they had had "extra help", or "one-on-one" for a specified time period. One inmate said he was "In Special Assistance, but didn't get it."

The average school leaving age for 67 of the inmate sample was 15 years. Of the other 10, one had completed high school in another country, 4 could not remember their school leaving age because of the circumstances affecting their youth, and 5 had had very little schooling, or none at all. The range of school-leaving ages for the 67 inmates was from 10 years to 19 years but without regular Grade 12 completion. Table 11 shows the reasons given by inmates for leaving school.

TABLE 11. Reasons of Inmate Sample for Leaving School

Reason	Number
Kicked out	13
Trouble with the law	9[a]
Drugs	6
Had enough	8
Just quit	11[b]
Family pressure to work	13[c]
Other	12[d]
No answer	6
Total	78

a
This group of inmates said they ended up in juvenile detention centres as a result of the "trouble."

b
Reasons for quitting were: "bored"; "tired of effort"; "Grade 7 was too hard"; "went fishing".

c
A few inmates had to take over responsibility for the family; some were needed to help with family enterprises; others just preferred work to school.

d
Other reasons given were: "ran away"; "moves" (2); "family problems" (2); "alternate school only went to grade 10"; "time to go" (at age 19 years); "political situation in Vietnam"; "graduation" (2 inmates, one of whom was an immigrant); "asked to withdraw" (2).

Adult Education Experience after School Leaving

Thirty-four inmates had tried some type of adult education program or course. Nine of the 34 were participants in the current school program in prison. Table 12 shows the range of activities attempted.

TABLE 12. Participation in Adult Education by Inmate Sample (N=78)

Activity	Number
Basic literacy	3
ESL programs at community college	3
BC Ministry of Education Correspondence Courses	4
ABE/BTSD at colleges or schools	5
GED preparation at college, school district or jail	5
Storefront and/or Friendship Centre	2
Business and Trades related	12
TOTAL	34

The inmates who were involved in basic literacy included a woman who had had a Frontier College tutor in Kingston, Ontario, and a male inmate who had tried to get a

tutor in Vernon through Okanagan College but ended up in prison instead! Another male inmate had spent 6 months in the PALS program in Saanich. This was a pilot IBM computer program for basic literacy which continues to be offered by Saanich School District (#63).

One inmate started going to a regional correspondence school, but then landed in jail. One inmate had completed Grade 10 English by correspondence and another had got his Grade 12 English through correspondence while in and out of jail. One woman had started a Grade 11 construction course by correspondence and was trying to work through it while in jail. (She was going to be matched with a tutor to get the help she needed to work on the course.)

Those who had been enrolled in ABE did not get very far with their studies. One other inmate who had taken a correspondence course had tried to get into East Kootenay Community College at Cranbrook. He took the tests, but could not get any financial sponsorship.

Four of the 5 who tried the GED courses did not complete them for various reasons. The two people who tried the Friendship Centre program left it after a very short time. The Storefront program was full and had a waitlist. The inmate who tried this program was tested, but when he could not get in he went to the Friendship Centre program and did not stay long.

The business and trades related courses were an interesting mix. One inmate had completed a heavy duty mechanics course in Collins Bay Penitentiary, Ontario. Another had tried a masonry course at an Ontario community college when he was 17 years old, but found it too difficult and quit. Someone else had taken a two day course for being a road construction flagman at B.C.I.T. Another male inmate had taken a 6-week union training course as a driller-blaster. One person had taken a three months Dale Carnegie course on Customer Relations and found it interesting and helpful. One of the women had taken a six months Hospitality Training course in Alberta before moving to British Columbia.

Interests of Inmate Sample

Only two inmates of the 78 interviewed said they had no interests. The remaining 76 mentioned 215 interests between them. These were a mixture of interests on the outside and hobbies and activities currently being undertaken in the correctional centres. Some inmates indicated past interests. Physical activities and sports are pre-eminent. Many of these and the arts and crafts reflect programs offered in the correctional centres. Most people who were into weightlifting lamented the lack of free weights on the inside. "Other crafts" includes a cluster of crafts carried on by women such as beading, knitting, crocheting. Few, if

any, musical activities are undertaken in jail. Musical interests generally represent talents used on the outside.

TABLE 13. Interests, Hobbies of Inmate Sample[a]

Activity	Number of Mentions
Sports/Physical Activities	96
Weights	12
Hockey	9
Baseball	8
Fishing	8
Football	8
Soccer	8
Swimming	5
Hunting	4
Floor hockey	4
Softball	4
Volleyball	4
Other sports (15)	22
Arts and Crafts	54
Woodworking/carpentry	17
Drawing/painting	6
Carving	6

TABLE 13. Interests, Hobbies of Inmate Sample (cont'd.)

Activity	Number of mentions
Mirror scratching	4
Leather work	4
Other crafts (12)	17
Music	40
Guitar (including electric)	11
Drums	4
Accordion	2
Other instruments (4)	5
Other musical activities	6
Listening to music	12
Literary	12
Writing poetry/lyrics	6
Reading	4[b]
Other	2
Miscellaneous	14
Mechanics	6
Watching T.V.	2
Other	6
TOTAL NUMBER OF MENTIONS	216

a
This list is a mixture of "inside" and "outside" activities. Weights and ball games are played on the "inside." Most prisons have hobby shops where woodworking activities, mirror scratching, and leather work are done.

b
Reading was offered by people who had few or no other hobby/interest mentions. Later questions specifically related to reading indicate a higher proportion of inmates read than this number suggests.

c
Other included: playing bridge, astronomy, cooking, looking after dogs (canine program in women's prison).

LITERACY PROFILE OF INMATE SAMPLE

The most commonly used definition of literacy in Canada at the present time is that of Statistics Canada (1989): The processing skills necessary to use the printed material commonly encountered at work, at home, and in the community. For the incarcerated, work, home and community are virtually one - the correctional facility where they are confined. What is the literacy environment within the Correctional facilities in British Columbia? How do inmates with poor literacy skills manage or cope in this environment? What opportunities are there to improve these skills? For this study literacy was interpreted as including reading, writing, spelling and numeracy (basic mathematical operations, concepts and processes). Also of interest was the general literacy environment - the kinds of required reading and writing demanded by the justice system and individual correctional institutions; the reading habits and preferences of inmates; and the perceived state and use of the correctional facilities' libraries.

There was some divergence in the treatment of inmate participants (Ps) and inmate nonparticipants (Non Ps). Because the Ps were actually attending prison school programs, it was important to ask them pertinent questions on that experience. In order not to extend the interview process over an hour, Ps were not asked to read or write or

to identify problems with spelling or math except where they were relevant to their classroom experience. Non Ps, on the other hand, were asked to read for the researcher and to do some writing as well as answering questions on spelling and math. Questions related to reading habits, preferences and the libraries were common to both Ps and Non Ps.

Reading Requirements of Inmates

It was the understanding of the John Howard Society of B.C. that every inmate receives a copy of an inmate handbook or prison manual when they enter a correctional facility. This was later identified to the researcher as the booklet: Correctional Centre Rules and Regulations 1986. This booklet is set out in legal format and language. One clause, for example, has one sentence of 105 words with 185 syllables. This is university post-graduate level of writing! As the literacy movement has gained momentum, the emphasis on clear writing or plain language has also increased. There was concern that inmates with low educational levels and literacy skills may not be able to read such material and thus be at a disadvantage in their incarcerated environment.

Questions on the "Rules and Regulations" were added after the VIRCC visits. Thus, 67 inmates were asked whether they had received a copy of the handbook on rules, whether they were able to read it and if they thought it would be

useful to simplify it.

The practices of actually receiving the booklet referred to seem to vary with the facilities. Some inmates actually receive the booklet - one inmate even had three! Others had never seen it (3 facilities). Some institutions have taken relevant sections, typed them up and have them posted on bulletin boards. Other inmates thought the full booklet was available to them upon request. One institution has an orientation video which explains the rules and regulations and also posts them in the living units. Some of the recidivists remember receiving the booklet in the past, but not in their most recent incarceration. Some of the multiple recidivists said they knew the rules from their many stays on the inside, so they did not or would not read the booklet. Others thought it would not be worth simplifying the language as inmates are told the rules and the rules change over time anyway. However, 42 of the 67 inmates (63 percent) said they thought it would be a good idea to use bigger print, simpler words and shorter sentences in making the rules available. Some suggested that they be translated into different languages for those whose first language is not English and to make sure that the rules are read and explained to inmates who may have literacy difficulties.

Inmates seemed to think there was not much required

reading in correctional facilities apart from usual memos and forms to be filled out. However, 41 percent of inmates interviewed indicated that they either definitely needed help (7 out of 78) or sometimes needed help (25 out of 78) with reading material. In the "sometimes" category, mention was made of help with "interpretation", and "vocabulary." Table 14 shows who inmates turn to for help.

TABLE 14. People Inmates go to for Help with Reading

Person	Number of Mentions
Other inmates	13
Teacher (for Ps)	4
Case Managers	3
Whoever	3
Guards	2
Other workers/officials	2

Reading for Pleasure

Newspapers. Sixty-five inmates (83 percent) said they looked at, skimmed through, or read a newspaper. The most popular items were: horoscopes (15 mentions); comics and cartoons (12 mentions); news and sports (10 mentions each).

The "pictures", "headlines", and "Dear Abby" had two mentions each. Eight inmates (10 percent of the total sample) said they read all parts of the newspaper. Other parts of newspapers that people said they read were: stock market news, automobile news, crime and court news, the classifieds, and the living section (these latter two were mentioned by female inmates). One inmate said he did not bother reading the newspaper as he wanted to avoid "bad news." In one living unit in a secure institution, three inmates said there was no newspaper delivered or available. Practices concerning the delivery and availability of newspapers vary with the different facilities. This theme will be taken up later.

Books. Under the heading of books read for pleasure, Stephen King was the most often quoted author being read (13 mentions); he was followed by Westerns (12 mentions); Mystery, and Science Fiction novels (6 mentions each); and Adventure, Horror, and Spy novels (3 mentions each). It is difficult to say whether these choices are really personal preferences, or a reflection of the kind of "literature" available in correctional facilities. Most living units appear to have a bookrack of well-worn pocket books which are constantly traded and in use. Many of the "libraries" provide only more of the same.

One or two inmates, however, had some surprises. One

inmate said he was reading books on meditation and "The Course of Miracles." Another, who had been identified as possibly "illiterate" by a well-meaning guard, said his brother sent him books to read by Henry Miller, and Alexandre Dumas, and he read them.

Other reading. Under "other" reading, 24 magazines were used. The most popular one was National Geographic of which most facilities seemed to have a supply. However, most inmates mentioned that the magazines were outdated - going back to the 1970s and 1960s. Sports and outdoors related magazines were the usual choices. Comics received most mention after the National Geographic. A small number of inmates indicated religious readings from the Bible and self-help kinds of material were important to them (9 mentions).

Material inmates would like to read. Inmates interviewed had many suggestions for enriching their lives through reading. The following items had more than one mention. "How-To" manuals on subjects such as mechanics, accounting, writing, languages, and math were the most often mentioned followed by more up-to-date National Geographics, and biographies or "true stories." Wildlife books, poetry, encyclopedias, history and geography were all equally mentioned. The Bible and healing books (for victims of sexual abuse and alcoholic families) were also mentioned. A

general plea was also made for more up-to-date and better magazines. One inmate who was a participant in a prison school program but was partially dyslexic, said he would like to be able to read "big (i.e. thick) books."

Reading Abilities of Nonparticipants (Non Ps). As part of the Non P interviews, inmates were asked to read for the researcher. A selection of short graded reading passages with adult content had been prepared. The passages ranged from first grade through to the tenth grade level. The most commonly used stories were about a window cleaner (Grade 1), fishing (Grade 3), a famous hockey player (Grade 5), cars (Grade 7), and a coffee shop (Grade 9). Some additional pieces were used as alternatives in institutions where the numbers to be interviewed were quite high, to minimize the effects of any possible talk or "coaching" by inmates from the same living units. Some alternative pieces had also been chosen for the women's correctional centres. The pieces were chosen from Literacy Volunteers of America's READ tests, the West Coast Reader, and Our Own Voices - a graded compilation of adult student writing from across the province. There were five comprehension questions for each piece. The questions were factual and inferential. One error was permitted in comprehension. The number of word recognition errors permitted increased from 2 to 6 as the grade level increased.

Another tool used was the Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT) - a series of 10 graded word lists from beginner's level to high school. The lists were labelled A to J so as not to convey "grade level", and to obtain frank reactions from the inmates. The inmate's stated level of education and comments about school experiences were used as guides to selecting a reading passage. If the passage chosen was too easy, the next more difficult one was given to the inmate. If the researcher felt unsure about the inmate's level, a copy of the SORT was given to the inmate. The inmate was asked to indicate where the words became difficult in terms of recognition, pronunciation, and/or meaning. The identified list gave a pointer to the passage to be selected for reading comprehension purposes. With some inmates, the SORT was the only tool used. A judgement call was made by the researcher based on the inmate's attitude in the interview, related experiences, and age.

Inmates were asked to read the passages out loud so the researcher could observe behaviour, intonations, phrasing and so on. Three preferred to read silently. However, about five or six inmates who read out loud said they could not remember what they had read and had to reread the passage or have it in front of them to answer the comprehension questions. About four or five of the inmates appeared to be "spaced out" probably because of substance

abuse problems. It was difficult for them to concentrate. Some inmates admitted that their concentration had deteriorated because of drug use.

TABLE 15. Reading Levels of Inmate Nonparticipant Interview Sample (N=56)

Level	Number	Percent (%)
Less than Grade 5	9	16
Grades 5 to 6	5	9
Grades 7 to 8	20	36
Grade 9 and over	18	32
Did not read in interview	4	7
TOTAL	56	100

Three of the people who did not read were people with little or no formal schooling and were Native. One was an older woman who insisted she was "retired." An older Native had problems with his eyesight. A younger Native was angry and hostile at the beginning of the interview (he had probably been volunteered, rather than coming of his own

accord). His answers revealed low level of schooling and probably low literacy, but the researcher felt it was wiser to continue getting answers to questions in the interview rather than push the reading. The fourth person who did not read had completed Grade 10 and was having trouble with his glasses at the time of the interview.

Five other people who did the reading indicated they had "problems" with their eyes and glasses, but gentle coaxing was used to encourage them to read, which they managed to do quite well. Of the "Less than Grade 5 group" - three of the nine were Asiatic immigrants whose first language was not English. Another five included two Natives and one French Canadian with little or no schooling, and two men who had left school early (Grades 5 and 6 respectively) for various reasons. The remaining person in this group said he had completed Grade 10 in Special Assistance. He asked for help with reading and wanted a tutor. He obviously had some difficulties. Some examples of substitutions he made in the reading were: "timed" for "timid"; "beach" for "bench"; "excellent" for "excited."

Of the remaining Non Ps, the reading level more or less matched with the stated level of education. With some of the older men, their reading level appeared to be one or two grades higher than their stated level of education. They attributed this to two factors - better teaching in "the old

days", and their own application through life. As the sample requested for this project was for those inmates with less than Grade 10, no instruments or tools were prepared at levels higher than this grade. Of the eighteen at the Grade 9 plus level, however, most probably would not be much higher than Grade 10 based on indications during the interview. The passages read were relatively short, and it was not the aim to submit inmates to intense screening processes, but rather to get a quick idea, as efficiently as possible of literacy abilities and whether these matched the stated level of education of inmates. Most of the men were thoroughly cooperative and some said they "enjoyed" the process.

Writing Practices and Abilities of Inmate Sample

Of the 78 inmates in the total interview sample, 5 of the 78 said they could only write their names or signatures. Another three indicated they hardly ever wrote anything. Sixty-seven of the inmates said they used their right hand for writing; six said they were ambidextrous and the remaining five wrote with their left hand. One woman, in addition to being able to write with both hands, was also able to write backwards. She wrote the researcher a note which was a perfect mirror image in cursive and she did not hesitate in its production!

Ten inmates said they preferred printing to cursive

writing and used it almost all the time. On the other hand, another seven said they had difficulty with or avoided printing because theirs was "messy" or "terrible."

Thirty-eight of the inmates said they could type or had used a typewriter at some time although 3 of the 38 specified they only used one finger. Twenty-nine inmates said they had used a computer to write and two school program participants said they were just going to start on computers in class.

The kinds of things inmates have to write in jail include canteen requests, requests to the administration for any special considerations, forms relating to parole and other legal and personal matters. Some inmates indicated requests for anything have to be in writing and in duplicate. The most common item where writing is needed is the weekly canteen request for tobacco and other supplies. Most inmates said they could manage these on their own. As lists of items and their prices are provided, even inmates with low literacy skills can manage to fill out these forms by copying. Should an inmate need help, however, they usually ask another inmate or the guard in their living unit. Immigrant inmates were more ready to acknowledge that they needed help and that it was easily given.

Forty-nine of the inmates said they write letters to family, friends, or girlfriends. Those with girlfriends

tended to be younger inmates, many of whom were quite ardent in their desire to keep in touch. They wrote multiple letters during the week. One inmate was going to be married upon his release; another was about to become a father; some were "engaged." Other inmates made quite poignant statements:

"I used to write letters, but haven't since 1986 - no one replies."

"I finally wrote a letter to my mother after 10 years."

"I keep my letters as short as possible."

"I never finish my letters, I end up 'phoning instead."

One of the women who had a federal sentence still keeps in touch with her former tutor in Kingston, Ontario.

Fourteen inmates said they wrote poetry, lyrics or verse. Three inmates said they were writing their autobiographies. One of the women practises calligraphy and does invitations for events in the unit.

There were 15 replies to the question "What kinds of things would you like to write?" Five of those who responded were participants in the school programs. Table 16 shows the responses.

TABLE 16. Things Inmates Would Like to be Able to Write

Item	Number of Mentions
Autobiography	4
Poetry	3
Short stories	2
Drama scripts for inmates	1
Song	1
Book report	1
Letters to the Editor	1
Letter to family	2

Forty-five percent of the total inmate sample (35/78) indicated they needed help either most of the time or some of the time with filling out forms, official or legal correspondence and canteen requests. This percentage is slightly higher than that requiring some help with reading (41 percent). Inmates who were participating in school programs tended to ask the classroom teacher and/or tutors for help. With justice system matters they tend to ask case managers or lawyers. One inmate said he asks the chaplain for help. As with reading, however, most inmates rely on other inmates for help with writing. One inmate with a

reasonably high level of education and good reading ability said he asks the guard to fill things out for him, because he is lazy! This same inmate writes lyrics for a band on the outside.

Writing samples of nonparticipant inmates. Non Ps who were interviewed were asked to do some writing for the researcher. They were asked to write about a place they had lived in or something about themselves they would like to relate. Up to ten minutes had been allowed for this activity. The results were quite interesting and ranged from signatures only to almost a full page of writing. In the latter case, however, a lock-down period came in the middle of the interview and the inmate took the writing with him to finish. By the time the break was over and the inmate back in the interview room, he had had the best part of one half hour to do the writing. Most inmates managed to write a couple of sentences only. The samples were usually sufficient, however, to pick up on the inmate's ability to spell, use punctuation, and syntax. The content was also often revealing. Selected samples are placed in Appendix C.

Writing difficulties of participant inmates. Inmate Ps were asked what they found difficult when they were doing free writing. A checklist was given for them to respond to. The results are shown in Table 17.

TABLE 17. Free Writing Difficulties of Inmates (N = 22)

Difficulty	Number of Mentions	Percent
Spelling	15	68
Punctuation	14	64
Sentence structure	9	41
Getting started	9	41
Making paragraphs	6	27

Seven of the inmates also said they had difficulty understanding what should be written in filling out forms.

Spelling Abilities of Inmate Nonparticipants

The reading and writing abilities for the Non Ps led naturally into questions about strategies used when inmates meet unfamiliar words during reading and when they do not know how to spell a word while writing. Table 18 summarizes the results around strategies. The questions were open-ended and the answers given as categorized by the inmates. "Figure it out", "guess", "use context" are all probably closely related, but the language used reflects level of inmate sophistication on language.

TABLE 18. Stated Strategies of Inmate Nonparticipants for Unfamiliar Words in Reading and Writing (N = 56)

Strategy	Number of Mentions	
	Reading	Writing
Use dictionary	19	12
Ask someone	15	17
Sound out	8	9
Figure it out	9	6
Guess	8	-
Use context	7	-
Avoid/skip word	7	3
Other answers	6	6
No answers	6	11
TOTAL	85[a]	64[a]

[a] All mentions were recorded, so total exceeds sample size of 56.

For spelling as part of writing, "other" strategies mentioned were substitutions with simpler words (four mentions) and searching a newspaper for the word and then copying it (2 mentions). Forty-eight of the 56 inmates (86 percent) said they knew when they had misspelled a word although four were really honest and said they could only tell if they already knew the word. Thirty-eight of the 56 inmates (68 percent) indicated that they knew how to identify a spelling error. By far the most common answer was "by the look of it" (28 mentions or 50 percent of the sample). Three inmates said they knew when they proofread their work.

Particular problems identified in spelling by inmates were the "tion" endings; "ie/ei" combinations; consonant doubling; and homonyms, eg. "where, were, wear." Twenty-eight inmates answered the question "How do you think you could be a better speller?" More than half of them (16 inmates) suggested practice and repetition as the solutions. Six inmates suggested going to school or having a tutor. Other suggestions were: using a dictionary (2); more reading and conversation (1); a phonics course (1); and checklists (2).

Numerical Abilities of Inmate Nonparticipants

No mathematical tests were given, but some questions were asked about math abilities. Thirty of 56 inmates (54

percent) said they could carry out the math required in their daily lives. Another two said they were alright with money matters. Twelve inmates said they needed help with nearly all math except the simplest operations with single digits. One inmate said he was "completely lost in math."

Of the four basic operations, division was the one giving most difficulty. Nineteen inmates (34 percent) said they had difficulty with division compared with eight inmates (14 percent) who said they had difficulty with multiplication. Twenty-one inmates (38 percent) said they had problems with fractions compared with 13 (23 percent) who said they had problems with decimals. Several other inmates, however, said they were "rusty" on these matters. Higher educated inmates within the sample often took the basics for granted and said they had difficulty with algebra, trigonometry and geometry, or physics math and calculus.

INMATE NONPARTICIPANTS' KNOWLEDGE AND PREFERENCE FOR PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Awareness of Prison Education Programs

Inmate Non Ps were asked: "Do you know about the educational program in this institution?" Eight of the 56 Non Ps (14 percent) said they did not know about the program. The reasons for not knowing are shown in Table 19.

TABLE 19. Reasons for Not Knowing About the Prison Education Programs

Reasons	Number
In prison hospital	1
In protective custody in institution where not allowed to attend school	1
Just transferred and "spaced out"	1
Newly arrived inmate immigrant (language factor)	1
At work camp and not told on entry	2
No reason given	2
TOTAL	8

Forty-eight of the Non Ps (86 percent) said they did know about the program, but 8 of the 48 said they found out from other inmates. Another two inmates said they knew from notices on bulletin boards in the living units. Parole requirements, asking the guards, and the P.A. announcements in the institutions were each mentioned once by an inmate as other ways of knowing about the program. The remaining 35 Non Ps did not volunteer any comments so presumably they knew about the programs either because they remembered being told on intake, or because of their previous stints in

prison.

Motivation to Attend Prison Education Programs

Twenty of 56 Non Ps said they had not thought of attending the education program. The reasons given for not attending are shown in Table 20.

TABLE 20. Reasons for Not Thinking of Attending Prison Education Programs (N = 20)

Reason	Number
Had attended in past but concentrating on other programs this time (D & A)[a]	3
Preferred to work	2
Too old[b]	2
Protective custody - didn't know	1
In hospital	1
Does not like daily pressure of attendance	1
Short sentence and already has GED	1
Parole denied, so uncooperative	1
Was in "digger"[c], would be made fun of	1
Low level education/illiterate[d]	2
TOTAL	20

a
Drug and alcohol/substance abuse programs.

b
Both of these people had limited or no schooling, but they were both over 60 years old so age was a convenient excuse.

c
Solitary confinement.

d
This is inferred - as they were inmates who reported little or no education.

Of the 36 Non Ps (64 percent) who said they had thought of attending, 23 had actually contacted someone about the program. Table 21 shows the results of these efforts.

TABLE 21. Results of Inmate Nonparticipant Contacts about Prison Education Programs (N = 23)

Result	Number
Been assessed, or put in request & waiting results	9
Waited and heard nothing (over a month)	2
Got an outside tutor - matched pair	1
Applied, but not let in (low-level student)	1
Attended, but kicked out of class (all in same institution)	3
Attended for short time, then went to work	2
Attended, but dropped out because of depression	1
Given math books to work on own	2
No answer	2
TOTAL	23

In addition, another three inmates said they had thought of attending the program, but two of them only had 30 day sentences; the third inmate was in remand and waiting

to see whether his appeal for bail would be granted.

Table 22 shows what the 36 Non Ps who said they had thought of attending school (prison education program) would like to learn to do better.

TABLE 22. Subjects and Skills Inmate Nonparticipants Would Like to Improve (N = 36)

Subject/Skill	Number
Reading, writing and spelling	6
Pronunciation and oral skills	3
Math	10
English	3
Computer-related	3
GED-related	8
"Everything"	3
TOTAL	36

Preferred Learning Arrangements in Prison

Inmate Non Ps were asked what kind of arrangements would make it easier for them to learn in prison. Ten options were provided. Table 23 shows the responses to this question.

TABLE 23. Inmate Nonparticipants Preferred Learning Arrangements in Prison (N = 56)

Learning Arrangement (Ranked)	%	Inmate Nonparticipants: Not thought of Attending (N=20) Number[a]	%	Thought of Attending (N=36) Number[a]	%
One to one with community tutor	61	13	65	21	58
One to one with teacher	50	10	50	18	50
Work on own in living unit	34	6	30	13	36
One to one with inmate tutor	32	6	30	12	33
Work on computer	20	5	25	6	17
Work with cassettes/ workbooks	14	3	15	5	14
Correspondence courses	14	3	15	5	14
Work in separate space in school area	11	4	20	2	6
Closed circuit TV	9	2	10	3	9

TABLE 23. Inmate Nonparticipants Preferred Learning Arrangements in Prison (cont'd.) (N=56)

Learning Arrangement (Ranked)	%	Inmate Nonparticipants: Not thought of Attending (N=20) Number[a]	%	Inmate Nonparticipants: Thought of Attending (N=36) Number[a]	%
Work in small groups	5	0	0	3	9
TOTAL		52[a]	n/a	88[a]	n/a

[a] Inmates were not limited in the number of mentions they gave; hence number of mentions exceeds number of inmates.

Table 23 clearly shows a preference for individual learning arrangements over group arrangements. Sixty-one percent of this sample favoured the use of community tutors. This choice outranks the instructor in both groups of Non Ps, and is slightly more favoured by the group who said they had not thought of attending programs. It is interesting to see that although many Non Ps previously said they ask other inmates for help with reading and writing, inmate tutors rank fourth overall in the list of arrangements. The idea of inmate tutors was new to many inmates. Some were very skeptical and laughed at the idea. Others mentioned it as a possible "scam" for getting out of work. Some were wary of inmate "power-tripping." More inmates made positive comments about the use of inmate tutors, however, than negative comments. Some just said, "It sounds like a good idea"; others said they thought it would work for specific subjects such as math and science.

Qualifying comments were made on the use of correspondence courses, closed circuit TV, and group work. Barriers to correspondence courses are seen to be the fees and lack of help. If these were removed, inmates saw correspondence courses as viable options, although they were also seen as being related to the length of sentence. Closed circuit TV learning was also a new idea and treated with some skepticism. Some thought it could work if there

were special arrangements made, the content was relevant and help was available as follow-up. It is interesting to note that only a few inmates who had thought of attending school favoured the group option, and nobody among the other group of Non Ps favoured it. Comments made were - keep the groups to less than five inmates; it could work in Life Skills; it could work for small workshops on writing techniques and critiques. These comments were all made by inmates at the higher end of the educational spectrum of the sample.

The inmates who thought of attending prison education programs favoured working on their own in their living units to a slightly higher degree than the other group of Non Ps. Yet those who had not thought of attending favoured working in a separate space in the school area to a greater extent than those who had thought of attending. Some of these discrepancies between the two groups may possibly be accounted for by the fact that many of those who had thought of attending, had actually attended or had seen the school area because they had been assessed there (See Table 21). Thus, they either had some experience of arrangements and/or had thought about possible arrangements.

Inmate Learning Styles

Inmate Non Ps were asked how they thought they learned best. Table 24 shows the responses. It is interesting to note that the emphasis is on the practical "watching, seeing

and doing/touching" categories and that most of the Native Non Ps fell into these categories. Rodriguez and Sawyer (1990) in their Native literacy study also found this tendency.

TABLE 24. Learning Styles of Inmate Nonparticipants (N=56)

Style	Number
Watching/seeing	24
Doing/touching	21
Listening	17
Memorizing	7
All of above	7
TOTAL	76[a]

[a] Some inmates mentioned more than one answer - the first two categories were often linked together.

Knowledge of Adult Education Programs on the Outside

Inmate Non Ps were asked whether they knew what adult education programs exist on the outside for adults, and whether they would think of going. Table 25 shows the

results of these questions.

TABLE 25. Knowledge and Attitude of Inmate Nonparticipants to Adult Education Programs on the Outside (N=56)

Item	Yes	No	Other[a]
Know about programs			
Number	29	24	3
%	52	43	5
Would think of going			
Number	22	19	15
%	39	34	27

[a] Responses in this category were of a hesitant nature - "not sure", "don't know", "maybe", "not really."

Almost half of the inmate Non Ps do not know about adult education opportunities on the outside. One or two of the inmates were from small communities where no programs existed. Those who said yes usually named their nearest community college, but their knowledge of programs offered was not probed. It is interesting to note that the group of Non Ps who had thought of going to programs on the inside,

also knew more about programs on the outside than the group of Non Ps who had not thought of attending programs on the inside (55 percent compared with 45 percent). The former group appears to be more motivated. A higher proportion of them also said they would think of going to programs (42 percent compared with 35 percent), and this group also had a higher proportion in the "other" (or uncertain) category (28 percent compared with 25 percent).

There is always a gap between intention and actual execution, and it may be particularly acute for an incarcerated population. When asked what would make it easier for them to go to an education program on the outside, 11 inmates said financial aid, 4 said more information and counselling, 3 said someone to help push-support/motivate them, and one said "if I had Grade 12!"

Career aspirations and goals mentioned by the inmate nonparticipant group are shown in Table 26.

TABLE 26. Educational and Career Aspirations of Inmate Nonparticipants (N=56)

Item	Number
Basic skills improvement to a useful level	5
GED	5
Computer skills	3
Mechanics related training	3
Electronics	2
Forestry related	2
Counselling/psychology	2
Autobody work	1
Animation (film/cartoons)	1
Carpentry	1
Cook/chef training	1
Farrier	1
Garbageman	1
Horticulture	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF MENTIONS	28

INMATE PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS ABOUT PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Awareness of and Motivation to Attend Prison Education Programs

The average length of time spent in a prison education program as part of current incarceration by the 22 inmate participants (Ps) was just over 11 weeks. Eleven of the Ps had been in the program less than one month, three had been in the program for over six months. The remaining eight Ps had been in the program for one to six months with most of them attending less than three months.

The ways in which inmate Ps found out about the prison education program are listed in Table 27, and Table 28 shows the stated motivations of the 22 inmate Ps. When asked whether their reasons for being in the program had changed since they began attending, five inmates (23 percent) said they had. One said it was originally a "scam" to help him get parole, but now he was pursuing education for its own sake and self-improvement. One said he was hoping to get his Grade 12 and take up carpentry. Another said it had generally strengthened his determination to get an education, while another one realized that he was not yet ready to try the GED which was his original motivator. The fifth inmate attributed change in motivation to factors other than school.

TABLE 27. Ways in Which Inmate Participants Heard About the Prison Education Program (N=22)

Method	Number
Other inmates	6
Told when came in	4
Knew from previous stay in jail	3
From other correctional personnel	3
Saw it[a]	2
Bulletin board in living unit	1
P.A. system in institution	1
Probation recommendation	1
Knew prison education instructor on outside	1
TOTAL	22

[a] These comments were made in the women's correctional centre. The gathering place in the secure unit is the open space in the rotunda. Both the school and the library are in this area so inmates can see them through the glass windows.

TABLE 28. Inmate Participants' Motivation to Come to the Prison Education Program (N=22)

Motivator	Number
Self-improvement	11
Obtain or prepare for GED	4
To stay out of trouble	2
Want to go to college	2
Want job on release	1
Writing autobiography	1
To fill in time while in prison	1
TOTAL	22

Twenty of the inmate Ps said the program was helping them while the remaining two of the sample said it was too early to say. (These two had been in their programs for less than 2 weeks.) The skills and subjects inmate participants hoped to improve by attending the education program are shown in Table 29. Table 30 shows what inmate Ps said they could do better as a result of attendance in the education program. Seventeen of the 22 inmate Ps said they generally felt better about themselves as a result of attending the prison education program. Two said there was

no change and three gave no answer. Change in attitude among inmates Ps surfaced as a major response to the question asking them how the prison education program was different from their past school experiences. (See Table 31.)

TABLE 29. Skills Inmate Participants Hoped to Improve by Attending Prison Education Programs (N=22)

Skill	Number[a]
Reading and writing[b]	6
Writing[b]	4
Spelling	5
Math	12
English	2
Grade 12/GED	1
"Everything"	3
TOTAL	33

[a] Inmates mentioned more than one skill.

[b] Skills are reported as inmates stated them. "Writing" was mentioned separately from "reading and writing."

TABLE 30. Things Inmate Participants Can Do Better as a Result of Prison Education Program Attendance (N=22)

Item	Number[a]
Math generally[b]	10
Fractions	7
Division and multiplication	3
Writing	7
Reading	6
Spelling	2
Oral communication	1
Focusing on topics	1
More positive outlook on life	1
Use computers	1
Improved typing speed (typing tutor)	1
TOTAL	40

a Inmates mentioned more than one skill.

b There were two mentions each relating to improvements in geometry and in algebra.

TABLE 31. Ways in Which Inmate Participants Perceive Prison Education Programs to be Different from Past School Experiences (N=22)

Difference	Number[a]
Inmate change of attitude	7
Instructors more helpful	11
More relaxed atmosphere	3
Go at own pace	2
Smaller class	2
Voluntary participation	2
No one makes fun of you	1
No difference	1
No answers	3
TOTAL	32

[a] Inmates gave more than one answer.

Where volunteers were used to give extra help in class, these were considered an asset. When asked if they disliked anything about the program, the major complaint was the lack of variety in subjects offered. Where computers were not available, inmates wanted them. Others wanted to pursue

social studies subjects - especially history and geography - and science. The other major complaint was really a positive statement about the school - time in class was too short. As was seen in Chapter 3, most prison education programs are only offered to inmates on a part-time basis. They want school hours to be expanded. One person also said there was not enough Life Skills offered.

Inmate Ps are also busy attending other programs in prisons where they are offered. Nineteen of 22 inmate Ps said they attended other programs. The 2 of the 22 who did not attend were in an isolated work camp setting where not as many programs were offered as in other institutions. A combined listing of programs attended included: Alcoholics Anonymous (AA); Narcotics Anonymous (NA); Emotions Anonymous (EA); Substance Abuse and Relapse Prevention (SARP); Man to Man; Woman to Woman; One-on-One Counselling; Life Skills; Anger Management; Church services/activities; Gym; Native Brotherhood and Native Sisterhood; Hobbies and Crafts.

All but two of the 22 inmate Ps said that they continued with their work in their living units. If they needed help, 8 said they asked another inmate who was either in the school with them or someone they knew and respected with higher education. Six of the inmate Ps said they waited and asked the teacher, two said they asked their tutors, and one said he sometimes asked the guard.

Sixteen of the 22 inmate Ps (73 percent) thought peer tutoring would be helpful in prison. This is a much higher percentage than that of the inmate Non Ps. The 6 of the 22 who said it would not be helpful, broke down as follows: 2 were from the same secure institution where the administration also thought peer tutoring would not work; 2 were from a work camp; 2 were women inmates who expressed reservations about this arrangement. All 22 inmate Ps, however, were in favour of community tutoring.

Prison Education Program Outreach and Expansion

Inmate Ps were asked whether they knew other people in their prison who they thought could be helped by the program. Fourteen out of 22 inmate Ps (64 percent) answered "yes." Of the 8 (36 percent) who said they did not know anyone 6 were female inmates, and 2 were male inmates at a work camp. In the Open Living Unit of the BCCW, about one-half of the inmates attend the school, others are out on temporary absences. In the secure unit, it seemed difficult to round up nonparticipants for interviewing. For whatever reason, maybe the women here keep to themselves and do not find out about other women as easily as the men do. At a work camp where men are in the bush or doing other outside work all day, it could be more difficult to discover people with literacy difficulties.

In the comments made about this question, four of the

inmate Ps stressed that the inmates themselves have to want to improve their education: without their motivation, it is a lost cause. An older inmate said that the young inmates do not see the need for education. Women were seen as being "shy", men were seen as being "proud." Someone suggested changing the focus or orientation of the program - for example, focus on different writing techniques and offer coffee and workshop formats. Table 32 shows how inmate Ps thought inmate Non Ps could be attracted to prison education programs

TABLE 32. Ways to Attract Inmate Nonparticipants to Prison Education Programs (N=22)

Strategy	Number
Advertising (including videotapes)	12
Inmate word-of-mouth	5
More talk about incentives (parole, TAs, etc.)	2
Case managers should do more	1
Use inmate tutors	1
Use more community volunteer tutors	1
TOTAL	22

Word-of-mouth has been previously established as the most reliable way of interesting low-literate adults in literacy and upgrading programs. One or two correctional facilities had planned the use of a promotional video about the school program. Hence, the emergence of this particular tool in the advertising category. Regarding the answers on tutors, the man who mentioned inmate tutors was in a facility where they were being used, and the suggestion on community tutors came from a female inmate where such tutors were being introduced.

Except in the BCCW where the program is full-time (or almost), all inmate Ps said the program should be expanded. More teachers, more subjects, more time were common suggestions from all male inmates except in the facility that offered a full-time program for part of the year. The request there was for more space and computers.

Intention of Inmate Ps to Continue their Education

Thirteen of 15 male inmate Ps (87 percent) said that they would try to continue their education on the outside. Another one said that he hoped to get his GED while incarcerated, but if he did not, then he might consider doing the GED on the outside.

Six of the seven female inmates (86 percent) also said they hoped to continue on the outside with education or training. Academic upgrading, literacy tutoring, ESL,

floral certificate, hairdressing, and Native counselling were the areas mentioned for continuing pursuit.

The high proportion of inmate Ps intending to continue education and training on the outside might be related to their desires to obtain parole. In order to be granted parole, plans have to be worked out, so this group of inmates could have done some serious thinking related to this end. Future career aspirations stated by the men included the following: study of psychology leading to social work; streetworker to keep kids off drugs; nursing; electrical engineering (after getting GED); something to do with computer graphics or printmaking; automechanics; heavy duty mechanics; going to Bible College to become a minister or counsellor; going to B.C.I.T. to do something with computers.

Five of the inmates said they would need financial assistance or loans to make education possible. Eight of the men specifically mentioned a post-secondary institution they hoped to attend. Two of the younger inmates were going to be married upon release and hoped things would then take a turn for the better. One young inmate was married with two young children and very conscious of the responsibility of fatherhood. The young man who said he wanted to go to Bible College said it would help to have a bus ticket to go directly there from prison!

TABLE 33. Suggestions for Community Agencies for Helping Ex-Inmates

Suggestion	Number
Support with transition from jail	4
Counselling and information on help available	5
Pre-release help - leave card for calls	3
Provide halfway houses	2
Help with job searches	2
Help to find accommodation	1
Help with clothing vouchers	1
More linking between jail, outside and colleges	1
Loans/bursaries for education	2
Have community tutors for all jails	2
TOTAL	22

Many of the suggestions in Table 33 are services offered by halfway agencies such as John Howard and Elizabeth Fry Societies. However, John Howard Societies are seen as favouring federal ex-inmates over provincial ones especially in the Fraser Region. The latter Region is the one with the greatest number of both federal and provincial institutions in the province so the needs and demands are

probably greater than the supply.

In concluding comments about their prison school experience, several inmates expressed their gratitude at having a school program and a second chance at learning. One inmate stressed how school had changed his thinking and was particularly appreciative of the additional help provided by volunteers. Some of the inmates stressed that when they first came into prison and started the program they would have been incapable of participating in an interview such as they had just experienced with the researcher!

Although inmate Ps are appreciative of current efforts to provide educational programming, they and inmate Non Ps had many suggestions as to other program offerings. This theme will be taken up later in this report.

5. FINDINGS - EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AS SEEN BY OTHER RESPONDENTS

RESPONSES OF DIRECTORS OF INSTITUTIONS

Other Educational and Support Activities for Inmates

Taken collectively, in addition to the academic upgrading or school program, the B.C. Correctional facilities offer a fairly wide range of related educational activities or inmate support programs. Such programs are offered in three ways - by contracts with private individuals or groups; by volunteers of recognized organizations and churches; by correctional staff. Contracted services are with people who provide psychological counselling type functions such as Life Skills, Drug and Alcohol Counselling, Anger Management, and Sex Offender Therapy. Voluntary services are provided through local AA groups or inmate groups, the Elizabeth Fry Society, the John Howard Society, St. John Ambulance, local religious groups, and Native organizations. Correctional staff generally have responsibility for sports, some hobby and craft activities, and some vocational type activities, e.g. - upholstery, fibreglass shop, woodworking. Library services can be contracted out to local educational institutions, to voluntary societies, or handled by the correctional facility.

As well as the above activities some of the open facilities are work camps. Rayleigh CC, for instance, runs a farm so inmates have the opportunity to learn about raising cattle, operating farm machinery, tending egg-laying chickens, gardening, growing vegetables, greenhouse work, and haymaking. This camp produces food to feed other correctional facilities in the region. Mount Thurston CC operates a sawmill and planer as well as being involved in other forestry activities. Other camps offer a mix of forestry, fishing, and parks maintenance kind of activities.

The range of activities offered in any one institution appears to depend on several factors - security level and inmate capacity; location - isolated, or close to a large town; kind of inmate population; range of community organizations available locally; attitude of correctional administrative staff; regional/institutional budget. The number of reported activities offered range from a low of two to a high of ten. The low figure was in a secure facility and the high one in an open facility.

Identified Educational Program Needs

Only one correctional centre already well serviced, said there were no perceived needs. All others expressed some kind of need. Hutda Lake CC which currently has no academic program would like to be able to offer basic literacy tutoring and GED training. Three institutions:

Prince George RCC, Mount Thurston CC, and Bear Creek CC would like to offer Life Skills training, but lack of funds and space limitations were cited as reasons for not being able to offer this service. Terrace CCC also sees a need for Life Skills.

Nine of the 17 respondents indicated there were increasing numbers of ESL inmates so that ESL training or tutoring is needed. Seven of the nine institutions were in the Lower Mainland (Vancouver Metro and Fraser Regions), but one was in the Interior, and one was in the Northern Region. One institution saw a need for tutoring low-literate inmates as the existing school program does not address those needs. Another institution needs diagnostic and support services for the learning disabled and mentally disabled inmates. Two institutions mentioned the need for addressing Native literacy issues. Three institutions expressed a need for vocationally related activities - training, job readiness (search skills, resume writing and presentation skills). One institution saw a need for improved pre-release planning. Two institutions expressed a need for extending the academic program contact time. One wanted an extension from 10 months to 12 months; the other wanted an increase in the number of instructional hours.

Fourteen of 17 respondents thought the space and facilities provided for the educational program were

adequate. Two of the three who did not think so were in the Northern Region and both indicated that there were plans for new facilities or major renovations.

Of the institutions not currently involved with volunteer tutors, four felt that a mix of community and peer (inmate) tutors would work best in their setting. One camp director said that because of its isolation, inmate tutors would work best. Another respondent thought community tutors would work best in his institution (a secure facility), but inmate tutors would work best in the camp. Inmate participants in this study who were in the secure institution were also of the same opinion.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Prison Education Programs

Table 34 shows how the Directors perceive the advantages of a prison educational program. Along with increased levels of self-esteem, several Directors mentioned changes in outlook, behaviour, and lifestyle. One Director saw education as increasing the life opportunities and choices available for inmates on release. One Director saw the advantages as being "Many and varied: from institutional management benefits, to individual trainee benefits, and ultimately societal benefits." Another Director in the Fraser Region saw the Regional Contract with the college as a great advantage as it facilitated the transitions and transfers between correctional centres for inmates. As they

moved from remand to sentenced secure and sentenced open inmates could still continue working on educational courses with the same college.

TABLE 34. Advantages of Prison Educational Program Activities as Perceived by Directors (N=17)

Advantage	Number[a]
Improved inmate self-esteem/confidence	8
Productive use of time	5
Improved employability	4
Improved basic skills	3
Other	3
TOTAL	23

[a] More than one advantage was mentioned by some respondents.

Directors were also asked to state any disadvantages or barriers to education in their institutions. Three of the 17 respondents said "None known", or gave no answer. The other responses are shown in Table 35.

TABLE 35. Disadvantages or Barriers to Education in Institutions as Perceived by Directors (N=17)

Disadvantage	Number[a]
Inadequate instructional time	4
Transience/mobility rate	2
Short sentences	2
Inadequate funding	2
Inadequate space	2
Inmate apathy	2
Evening only programs	2
Different pay levels	1
Separation of PC and GP adds to cost	1
Conflicts between work/school/therapy schedules	3
Lack of correctional staff support	1
Restricted subject offerings some equipment items not allowed	1
Isolation from community	1
Lack of pre-release planning and links	1
TOTAL	25

[a] More than one disadvantage was mentioned by respondents.

Role of Community Agencies

Eleven of 17 respondents (65 percent) made some comments on the role of community agencies in helping offenders within and outside prison. Generally they all thought that there was a definite role to help offenders both on the inside and the outside. Directors saw volunteerism generally as useful in Corrections, and, in particular stressed the role of volunteer tutors and others in providing a link during the transition period of pre- and post-release. Specific mention was made of volunteer tutors helping with the trauma of registrations into formal institutions. The need for continued support and counselling after release in order to proceed to the next level of education was also mentioned. Community agency help with formulating and executing pre-and post-release plans of inmates was another mention. A definite need for community volunteer tutors was stressed for basic literacy and ESL in one centre as the instructor already has her hands full. One centre stressed the importance of their ongoing partnership with the John Howard Society in their community.

There were other issues that the Directors were asked to comment upon, but as other groups of respondents were asked the same or similar questions, these will be dealt with in Chapter 6.

RESPONSES OF ABE ADMINISTRATORS

A short questionnaire was sent to the designated adult basic education (ABE) coordinators of the five community colleges which have educational contracts with B.C. Corrections. These colleges are: Camosun College, Douglas College, College of New Caledonia (CNC), University College of the Cariboo (UCC), and University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV). In the first three colleges the contract negotiations and responsibilities for fulfilling the requirements rest with the college administrators with overall responsibility for ABE. In UCC, the person with responsibility for the regional prison education contract is the Chair of Access Programs. In UCFV there is a part-time Prison Education Coordinator with responsibility for the programs in that region. A sixth questionnaire was mailed to the B.C. Borstal Association which has the contract in New Haven CC. All administrators (100 percent) responded.

Apart from the specific issue questions asked of all groups or respondents, the questions to administrators dealt with topics such as selection criteria and hiring processes, overriding evaluation functions, opportunities for

professional development for prison education instructors, and community links.

Qualifications, Selection and Training of Instructors

Academic. Five out of six administrators mentioned a degree as part of the qualifications. The answers were: "bachelor's", "relevant degree", "a degree", "degree in Math or English", and "degree in education or equivalent." The latter respondent also said "Master's or equivalent." Four of the other five administrators said a teaching certificate was required with one saying specifically, "A current B.C. Teacher's Certificate."

Experience. One respondent made a general statement: "Two years or equivalent." Another respondent said previous experience was desirable, but not often found. The other four administrators stressed the importance of previous adult teaching experience, or work with inmates, Natives, Special Needs learners, or hard to motivate individuals.

Personal qualities. Included under this heading were the following attributes: empathy and understanding of the varied backgrounds of offenders; commitment to the field; caring; flexibility; ability to foster independence in inmate learners; stability; confidence; non-judgmental; sense of humour; ability to work in isolation; ability to conform (follow rules); ability to cope with the unexpected.

Selection process. Administrators were asked who did the selection of instructors. In the colleges the answers were: faculty committee and Dean; faculty, ABE Director, and representative of the correctional centre; Departmental Selection Committee; sometimes the Chair(of college division), sometimes Personnel Committee; a committee of college instructors, college administration and representative of the correctional centre. For New Haven CC, the Executive Director of the B.C. Borstal Association chooses the instructors.

Pre-service or orientation training for new instructors Three administrators said there was no training. Three indicated some measures were taken. One administrator said an informal interview took place prior to actually offering the position to the potential candidate to determine the instructor's attitudes. Another administrator indicated that a briefing was given on the chain of command, and the rules and regulations of the correctional centre, as well as the limits of the contract service provider within the institution. A third administrator said a new instructor observes in class for two or three weeks, before taking over.

Professional development of instructors. In three colleges, faculty are allowed access to the professional development provisions available for all faculty. These

include release time and a financial allowance for the instructors to use to their best advantage. There are no special provisions for correctional education per se, although one administrator said corrections faculty had begun to have monthly meetings. There is a B.C. chapter of the U.S. based Correctional Education Association (CEA), which was mentioned, but apparently it is not very active. The general impression is that there is very little professional development geared to the specific needs of correctional instructors in B.C. The B.C. Borstal Association provides some opportunities for its staff.

Administrators' Visits and Evaluation Procedures in B.C. Prison Education Programs

Visits. All administrators visit the correctional centres where they have contracts, but the purposes differ. One college administrator goes to negotiate the contract but another college administrator is responsible for the contact with the instructor. Another administrator visits twice in a semester, but commented that this was disruptive to students as they tend to "act up." In another centre, the administrator holds a staff meeting there and also meet with the corrections staff. Another administrator indicated that the number of visits depended on the confidence of the instructor. Also, this administrator sometimes substitutes in class for the instructors. Two administrators indicated

that they visit regularly to meet with correctional staff about the program and to oversee educational programs and instructors.

Staff evaluations. Five out of six administrators said that instructional staff are evaluated . Where they are not evaluated, it is because of problems experienced in the past within the institution. One college administrator received peer and student evaluations of the instructor(s). Another administrator holds quarterly meetings with correctional administrators around instructional staff performance. Frequent visits, meetings of instructional staff, assistance with instructors' problems, overseeing delivery of course material and faculty evaluations are all part of the work of another administrator.

Program evaluations. Four out of six administrators said that programs are evaluated. In the two instances where they have not been, procedures are being planned for implementation in the near future. In one case the instructors are involved with their administrator in the development of the procedures. In the other, the evaluation will fall within the orbit of other ABE program evaluations in the college. In another situation, the evaluation done is part of the college's cyclical program evaluation process which takes place every five to seven years.

Three administrators indicated annual evaluation

processes took place. In one case, program evaluation was seen as "informal": a yearly report to corrections staff, and a meeting to assess strengths and weaknesses and future directions. In the other two cases, more formal measures such as student progress reports and "client satisfaction questionnaires" were used as part of the evaluation process.

Community Linkages

Administrators were asked whether their institutions provided counselling or other support towards integrating offenders into the community upon release. Three out of six administrators said they did not provide such services, although one said that college counsellors can give advice on academic issues. Another respondent said that they would very much like to develop a pre-release program, but had to present a proposal for this to happen. One of the three administrators who responded positively to the question indicated that the linkages were informal and depended upon faculty liaison with community agencies and post-secondary institutions regarding post-release plans. One college does provide an itinerant counsellor and if inmates are interested in continuing their education on release they are incorporated into the nearest ABE campus in the region. If they will be living outside the college region, attempts are made to facilitate offenders' entry into the institutions in that region.

The B.C. Borstal Association uses agency staff and volunteers to help offenders enter the community when they are released. The Association also operates the Dick Bell-Irving halfway house. The University College of the Cariboo collaborates with the regional Elizabeth Fry Society and the local detox centre in the provision of other educational services (potential tutoring program, and Life Skills respectively). The College of New Caledonia has a link with the John Howard Society of the region which helps with library services and the identification of inmates requiring literacy tutoring.

RESPONSES OF CORRECTIONAL INSTRUCTORS

Twelve responses were received from academic instructors operating in fourteen of the fifteen correctional centres which offer prison education schools. One response was received from a college contracted Life Skills coach. One institution had two people who responded from the same program. One instructor taught in four correctional centres. No questionnaire was sent or received from instructional staff at New Haven CC because of the late date in discovering who delivered the educational service at that facility. Nine of the instructors were women. The other three and the Life Skills coach were men.

Status and Experience of Instructors

At the time of the survey, six instructors were full-

time for the length of the contract (10 months or less), and six were part-time. One of the centres also had a part-time aide. The Life Skills coaches are part-time. Three of the instructors said they were tenured college faculty but operating under the contract with B.C. Corrections. The remaining instructors said they were on contract. Only four instructors indicated that they had worked in their present correctional centre for over one year (the range was thirteen months to four and one-half years). All other instructors had worked in their present correctional centre for less than one year, but the aide had worked for 11 years. Four of the instructors working less than a year in their present centres had worked in other provincial correctional centres. Collectively, the twelve respondents had spent 34 years in correctional education and 73 years in ABE. One fairly new instructor had previously spent 10 months as a volunteer in corrections, another instructor had had 15 years experience in federal corrections.

Instructors' Duties

Chapter three gave a brief description of present programming arrangements in each of the correctional centres which need not be repeated here. However, descriptions of the typical duties of an instructor in a correctional setting show that instructors have to be highly organized, competent and flexible individuals. Essentially, most of

them run a one-room schoolhouse in a specialized setting where students are at different levels of ability and have different needs.

Here is the description of the duties supplied by one full-time instructor:

-teach math and English at all levels both in groups and on an individualized basis;

-teach ESL or arrange for tutors to work with ESL students;

-assess students' skills and create waiting lists for the school;

-match tutors and students;

-deal with problems raised by students, tutors, staff;

-write support letters for parole applications;

-set up educational contracts as part of a release plan;

-forward files to other institutions as part of transfer package;

-one-on-one counselling when needed;

-maintain "control" of classroom area.

In addition to duties mentioned above, instructors in some centres have to supervise and help with the use of computers and programs, supervise correspondence course tests, write monthly student progress reports, arrange for GED tests, recruit, train and supervise volunteer tutors,

liaise and consult with correctional staff, and, in some instances, be responsible for organizing library services. This range of duties is accomplished by part-time instructors as well as full-time unless they have restricted entry of inmates to a certain grade level (usually Grade 8 in institutions where this applies).

Program Information

Six instructors (50 percent) said that there was a mission statement or philosophy for their educational program. However, only four instructors were able to articulate one. The other two said their programs came under the overall Mission and Values of the ABE Department of their college. One statement was related to the employability of inmates upon release; others dealt with student-centred approaches; rights to education, student empowerment and bridges back to the community through the education program.

All instructors except one indicated that they were involved in yearly program reviews with correctional staff and/or college personnel.

Instructors from four of the colleges with B.C. Corrections contracts confirmed what their ABE Administrators said about program evaluation: i.e. systems were in place (2); or not in place (2). In the other college, instructors say they provide monthly and year-end

reports to the centre's and college's administration. As these activities are seen as evaluation activities, instructors and administrators appear to have different perceptions or interpretations of what constitutes "program evaluation." In the Nanaimo CC, monthly reports are also submitted to the correctional staff who have the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the school program in that centre.

Awareness of school program. Table 36 shows how instructors perceive inmates find out about the prison education program.

TABLE 36. Instructors' Perceptions of Ways in Which Inmates Find out About the Prison Education Program (N=12)

Method	Number[a]
Inmate word-of-mouth	10
Correctional staff	9
Told in orientation	3
Posters in living units	3
Know about school from other prisons	2
Video	1
TOTAL	28

[a] More than one method mentioned

These results should be compared with Table 27. Correctional staff mentioned by instructors included Case Managers, Classification Officers, Administrative Personnel, and Living Unit Officers. One secure centre has a video which is shown in orientation. Another one has developed a video specifically to address literacy issues and the school. One instructor commented that: "Promotion of the school is a challenge."

All instructors said that there are inmates with low levels of literacy in their centres who do not come forward for help, but they are hard to find or reach. The usual way of hearing about such people is through other inmates in the school and sometimes the correctional staff. Use of bulletin boards and posters, and inmate committees were mentioned as ways tried to reach low-literate inmates. Some instructors felt correctional staff were supportive, others felt they were less so. One instructor said that if living unit officers were aware, probably more inmates requiring literacy help could be reached. Six instructors (50 percent) said no specific outreach strategies to reach low-literate inmates were used. These responses included those from the institutions that do not accept low level students into their programs.

Assessment of students. All of the instructors use

placement tests for potential students. Five instructors specifically mentioned versions of the CAT (CAT 17, 18, or 19 depending on educational level of inmate). Other tests mentioned were ABLE for lower level students, Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills, the ZIP Scale for Reading Comprehension, and other ABE tests used by the instructor's college. Most instructors mentioned personal interviews as being important indicators as a first step. Four instructors said they asked for writing samples, and one mentioned also that she asks the inmates to read to her.

Student-teacher ratios. The average student capacity of the B.C. prison school is about 12 places, and the average attendance ranges from four to six in the smaller classes upward to between 15 and 20 in daytime programs. An instructor-student ratio of 1:10 seems satisfactory to most instructors, but if it gets higher they can only manage with extra help from tutors. Two schools have two instructional people in the school areas, so the ratios are lower than average. One correctional centre has a list of 20-30 regulars - they do not all come to class at the same time, some are working with tutors, or with material on their own. This is a camp setting where inmates attend after work on a voluntary basis. It is a high ratio and a heavy workload for the number of hours the instructor works. Several instructors indicated that some inmates were following

correspondence courses and courses from the Open Learning Agency (OLA).

Extra help for literacy students. Except in the two institutions where low level students do not appear to be accepted into the school, most instructors felt that extra help was needed to meet the learning needs of basic literacy or Fundamental ABE students. Six instructors (50 percent) definitely said help was needed at this level. One instructor said that it was impossible to give prolonged one-on-one help, given the needs of the other students. Three instructors said or implied there was not enough time to give the help needed at this level (without extra assistance). Two instructors indicated that they relied on tutors (inmate and community) to help at this level and with ESL students. Three instructors (25 percent) gave qualified answers to the question. They said they can give help at the literacy level provided there are no more than one or two students in the class, otherwise there are difficulties with the other students who cannot get their share of attention. One instructor said extra help had been requested, but had not been received.

The existing use of volunteer tutors or potential use has already been noted in Chapter 3. The preferences for community tutors of both Inmate Non Ps and Inmate Ps who were interviewed was also illustrated in Chapter 4. These

findings from the instructors emphasize and corroborate the need for additional one-on-one help if literacy and ESL needs of inmates are to be met. Where volunteers are not currently used by or in the school program (4 centres), one instructor said they were not readily available or did not want to work in a correctional setting; another said their isolated location was a problem; the two remaining centres are the ones which are selective in their choice of students. However, one centre does have literacy volunteer tutoring provided through another source and the other one will be getting volunteer tutors.

Nine of the instructors indicated that they had links with community literacy groups or agencies providing volunteer tutors. The groups included: I-CARE (the long established community literacy program of Douglas College); Literacy Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Region John Howard Society; the Learners' Network of Project Literacy Victoria and the Adult Learning Centre (Sooke SD #62); Mission Literacy Association (Fraser Valley); the Prince George Adult Literacy Tutors' Program (VALT) of CNC; and the Kamloops Elizabeth Fry Society.

Instructional methods and materials. At the most basic literacy level, instructors confirmed the use of one-on-one work based on learners' needs. Individualized instruction and learning based on a curriculum were used at the higher

levels of Fundamental ABE and for math. Seven centres indicated that they had the use of computers for instruction. The most notable omission in this regard are the correctional centres in the Fraser Region. Only three instructors mentioned small group work, but two indicated that it was seldom used; the third instructor said she did do small group work, perhaps it is noteworthy that this was in the Open Living Unit of BCCW.

The materials used for literacy instruction probably reflect an instructor's approach to and experience with both reading and working with adults. The range was from "anything that works", to highly structured approaches such as the BLADE program. Materials cited were: the West Coast Reader, the literacy insert in the Province, literacy novels, functional materials (everyday print), Steck Vaughn series, Laubach Way to Reading, SRA Kits, Videos, college ABE materials, and at higher levels the standard ABE materials used in the province. One instructor said she used a phonic approach to reading, and a drill approach to math. Three other instructors mentioned that they encouraged and used "lots of writing" which flows from the use of a language experience or whole language approach to literacy. For writing, the title Writing the Natural Way was mentioned; for spelling, Word Power Made Easy; and for math, the Troubleshooter Series.

Instructors were asked whether they were familiar with specific materials developed for literacy work and/or for correctional settings. Six items were listed. On the average, only three instructors per item said they were familiar with them. The familiarity often meant only that they had heard of the material or read about it. Six instructors (50 percent) indicated no familiarity with any of the items. It is perhaps significant that five of these instructors were in the Interior and Northern Regions and the other one was very new to the whole field. These findings could have implications for Professional Development of correctional educators.

Student progress and follow-up. All instructors indicated that each student has an individual program plan and that their progress is monitored continually. Five instructors indicated the use of daily logs. Two instructors said progress monitoring came with every class assignment and homework. Four instructors mentioned "regular tests." Two instructors each mentioned "weekly reports", and "monthly reports."

Instructors were asked whether they offered any rewards to students for progress and achievement. Perhaps the word "reward" was too strong, "recognition" may have been a better choice of word. One instructor said, "Course completion is the reward, bribery is not part of the

program." In another centre, the rewards are "Praise and encouragement." Some of the "rewards" are of an official or formal nature: interim reports, course completion certificates, college transcripts, certificates of recognition for work accomplished, awards for those "who try hard" but will not get an official certificate, letters of commendation to Case Managers and other correctional personnel. One instructor gives calculators to inmates when they complete introductory math. These are provided through a community group's donation of funds. Other instructors offer: "glowie stickers, happy faces, scratch and sniff stickers, and scribble and sniff pencils." Another instructor provides birthday cakes or other goodies for special events and end of class socials. One instructor offers students a choice of movie for an essay topic.

Five of the instructors have recognition events for students. Where inmate tutors are used, they are given tutor-training certificates at a special lunch. In other institutions - the class informally recognizes the achievement of a particular student; certificates are presented in class in another centre; a party with gifts is held in one of the women's centres; and in one of the open centres, volunteer tutors have a "graduation" evening, and GED "graduates" are taken out for dinner and a special event.

In terms of follow-up when inmates leave a particular institution only the Fraser Region Centres and Nanaimo CC indicated there was any kind of follow-up, although one other instructor said that there is follow-up if she knows they are being transferred to another correctional centre. Most instructors implied that students were on their own once they left, but some students may get in touch with instructors after they have left. Instructors in the Fraser Region and Nanaimo do try to keep in personal touch with their students by phone, correspondence and sometimes meetings, especially to help with educational matters on the outside and links with other institutions.

All instructors indicated that they had recidivists in their programs. Instructors were also asked whether students left the education programs for reasons other than release or transfer. Table 37 summarizes the responses.

TABLE 37. Reasons Given by Instructors for Students Leaving Prison Education Programs (N=12)

Reason	Number[a]
Family or personal problems	5
No commitment to program	5
Quitters	2
Difficulties with other students or teacher	2
Pay inequity with work program	2
Infraction of Centre's rules	3
Negative peer pressure	1
TOTAL	20

[a] More than one reason given.

Adequacy of program facilities and equipment. Instructors felt that the space for the prison education program was adequate in nine of the correctional centres, but was inadequate in the other five centres. The situation could be improved in Prince George (new facility or renovation is planned), in Ford Mountain, in BCCW's Open

Living Unit, in Nanaimo CC, and in Fraser RCC. In the latter three instances the instructors' perceptions are different from those of the Directors of institutions who thought the facilities were adequate. These three programs are all very popular and have high numbers of participants. The researcher can confirm from her visits that space is a problem. These are all programs which use volunteer tutors to help out with instruction as well. Fraser RCC needs more help with ESL students, and also wants computer assistance. This latter is also echoed by the other instructor in the Fraser Region. Three other instructors who do have computers would like better and more equipment and programs. Two instructors wanted more student workloads and materials to enhance the learning environment.

Special Needs or Problems in Corrections

In this section of the questionnaire, instructors tended to reinforce needs and problems already identified: emergent need of ESL inmates, lack of diagnostic services and support for learning and mentally disabled inmates, inadequate space causing transfer to other institutions, lack of effective ways of reaching those in need - the low-literate adults, lack of follow-up on release or transfer of inmates, very few linking or bridging mechanisms with regard to education when inmates leave.

Eight instructors (67 percent) mentioned the short sentences and high turnover rate. Some saw this as frustrating, others as a challenge. Some feel that if inmates are in school and making progress that they should not be transferred to another institution as it is disruptive. Regional contracts with one college can help mitigate some of this, but there are effects on the inmates. The frustration for instructors also comes in seeing inmates make progress and then having them released before course completion with nowhere to go to complete. One instructor said inmates in that institution are treated as college "quitters" and get a "no credit granted" on the transcript. There is no allowance or recognition of what they have achieved. Inmates also need a place to go to <u>immediately</u> to continue their education. Two instructors said students just get started and then they are gone. One instructor commented on the high rate of recidivism and presence of hard core inmates who are in on drug and alcohol-related charges. The challenge is to try to change their thinking and give them real work skills so they can make it on the outside. One instructor wondered whether there was any advantage to having a literate criminal over an illiterate one. Literacy has to be of use in furthering an offender's education. Other problems mentioned were the need for more relevant curriculum and resources for Natives who generally

have suffered from racism in the past and have low self-esteem. Young adult offenders (18 years) were also seen as requiring different approaches than older offenders. One instructor said there was a need for both more contact time, "prep" time and meeting time in the educational contract.

Staff training and professional development. Seven instructors said they had no pre-service or orientation training, they had to make it on their own. One instructor had previously worked in federal corrections so that was useful. Another instructor had worked as a volunteer for a year, so that was her orientation. The remaining instructors said they had spent some time (a few hours to several weeks) training on the job with the previous instructor.

Instructors from three colleges reiterated the policies for professional development (PD) that existed in their colleges, although one part-time instructor said she was not eligible for these provisions because of her part-time status. In another college, two instructors felt there were no PD opportunities. Yet a third instructor said there were in-services at the college and a course could sometimes be taken. In the fifth college region, instructors felt some workshops were offered sometimes. The Nanaimo instructor has a small annual allowance for PD activities.

All twelve instructors liked the idea of linking with other correctional educators in the province. Meetings once a term were suggested to learn from each other's experience and ideas. Some instructors felt there was no vehicle for them right now, although another instructor mentioned the B.C. chapter of the CEA. Apparently, this is not a very active chapter. Newsletters, conferences and workshops were all suggested as means of sharing experiences.

Other comments. Some instructors asked that the Ministry of the Attorney-General, Corrections Branch be more explicit about its educational policy. Is the aim rehabilitation? If so, how can everyone work together to achieve this aim? One instructor sees that the emphasis has to be on rehabilitation - that inmates have to learn to leave behind their substance abuse problems, otherwise education is of little use. Two instructors specifically mentioned the importance of computers as a motivational aid and help in writing. More useful software is required and more hardware. Another instructor felt that better use could be made of TV resources as inmates "watch hours of junk at taxpayers' expense." Another suggestion was that Ross and Fabiano's Cognitive Skills Training be taken seriously. More useful trades and technically related courses for inmates were also requested. More funds to increase resources and contact time were also requested. In

the Fraser Region there was a request to go to a 2 year contract system instead of the present annual system of seven months and three months. More support for post-release programs leading to achievement was also stressed. A bursary and scholarship fund for deserving individuals was also suggested along with a plea for free courses for inmates who study through OLA, correspondence, and attend colleges on TAs.

RESPONSES OF COMMUNITY GROUPS

There were eight responses from halfway agencies - five John Howard Societies and three Elizabeth Fry Societies - and seven responses from community literacy groups. The program involvement of the halfway agencies in literacy was outlined in Chapter 3 and references have been made throughout this report. The responses to additional questions will be dealt with here.

Halfway Agency Responses

Three of the eight agencies indicated that the research report and subsequent work done by the John Howard Society of Canada had stimulated their agency to become more involved in literacy. One agency said that the reports had raised its awareness and they were trying to be more acute at identifying literacy levels of clients. Another agency had also had its awareness raised and looked into the local Project Literacy group. The third agency said it discussed

ways to make their office space "more literacy friendly."

Most of the John Howard Societies who replied said their clients were offenders and ex-offenders. In addition one agency deals with "at risk" youth and is involved in the addition of an educational component to a youth residential program through the local school district. Another agency indicated it also worked with families. Most of the agencies try to help clients access local programs and community services.

In terms of literacy concerns, one agency which helps facilitate one-on-one tutoring would like to see a solidly funded literacy program in regional correctional centres. Another agency thinks there needs to be more effective communication with community groups and agencies to bring down the barriers and stereotyped images of offenders.

Of the three Elizabeth Fry Societies that responded, one had minimal involvement with offenders, its activity was geared mainly to victims of abuse. One society was actively involved with the BCCW and female offenders. Another is involved in providing library services, arts and crafts, and tutoring in the Kamloops RCC.

Community Literacy Groups

Seven of 20 groups who were mailed the questionnaire responded. All of them ran a literacy program, but only one was in an urban area where a provincial correctional

institution was located. This group did not serve inmates in that institution because it believes service is provided within the institution.

Five of the seven respondents said they accepted ex-offenders into their literacy program. Two of the programs said other than the normal screening process, there were no special arrangements for ex-offenders. The other three programs indicated some cautionary measures were taken: ensure tutoring locale is entirely satisfactory - use classroom in halfway house in town; if an ex-inmate (federal) is on mandatory supervision the learner and tutor meet at the group's office; more in-depth probing, inspection of present circumstances and coordination with visiting psychologist. The remaining two of the seven respondents said that they do not ask prospective learners whether they are ex-offenders, so they do not know whether any of their learners are in this category, so no special arrangements are made. Anyone who asks for tutoring, receives it.

Of the five who said they accept ex-offenders into their programs four of the five said they made some provisions in their training and selection of tutors. In one case, tutors willing to work with ex-offenders get some orientation and extra help as requested; in another instance some seminars are given by the psychologist; in the others,

the matching is seen as the most important feature.

Only two literacy groups who replied are located in towns or cities where there are halfway agencies. Both indicated they had links with these agencies through client referral and volunteers doing community service in the programs. One long-established community literacy group said it had served several ex-offenders either through referrals from the halfway house, or from the community. All experiences have been good and positive. A learner-centred approach to literacy needs has been used and many learners have gone into formal ABE programs. The formula for success with ex-offenders is seen as a combination of the right program and the right tutor.

As a postscript to this section it should be noted that the oldest community literacy group (i.e. Project Literacy group) is only six years old. Some of the respondents had been in existence for only one year or less. Most groups are struggling to remain afloat because there are few funding sources they can access for literacy delivery. Several Project Literacies do not offer direct literacy delivery. These factors taken together may account for the low response rate of this sector.

6. FINDINGS - SPECIFIC ISSUES

The issues that will be addressed in this chapter are those that were identified ahead of time and embodied in questionnaires and interviews for respondents' feedback and comment.

MANDATORY ASSESSMENT, ATTENDANCE AND INCENTIVES FOR PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In 1987, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) adopted a mandatory testing and attendance policy for inmates in federal penitentiaries with less than a Grade 8 level of educational achievement. In the U.S.A., federal prisons and several states also have mandatory educational testing and attendance policies for undereducated inmates. Preliminary informal discussions suggested that it would be worth asking respondents about these issues. An allied issue is one of incentives particularly related to pay. The current situation in the province is as follows: minimum daily pay in secure centres is $2.00; minimum daily pay in open centres is $3.00. The maximum daily pay is $10.00. Different pay is received in different institutions depending upon the work done. The Regions have the responsibility for determining the level of pay in their centres. There appear to be variations in pay which participants in school programs receive. The regional responsibility probably accounts for this situation. Table

38 shows how the different groups of respondents came down on these issues.

TABLE 38. Respondent Groups' Reactions to Issues of Mandatory Assessment, Attendance, and Incentives for Prison Education Programs

		Mandatory Assessment				Mandatory Attendance			Incentives		
Category	N	Vol.	1st	2nd	Other[a]	Yes	No	Other[a]	Yes	No	Other[a]
Inmate Non Ps	56	36	17	1	2	12	43	1	42	10	4
Inmate Ps	22	13	8	1	-	6	16	-	14	8	-
Directors	17	12	1	2	2	2	15	-	9	8	-
ABE Administrators	6	3	2	-	1	1	5	-	not asked		
Instructors	13	10	2	-	1	2	11	-	8	2	3
Halfway Agencies	9	5	3	-	1	2	6	1	7	2	-
Literacy Groups	7	5	2	-	-	-	4	3	4	2	1
TOTALS	130	84	35	4	7	25	100	5	84	32	8
%	100	65	27	3	5	19	77	4	68	26	6

a "Other" includes no answer, or comments only

Mandatory assessment. All questionnaire respondents were asked whether they were in favour of mandatory educational assessments for all inmates when they were sentenced to jail:

(a) for the first time;

(b) only after a second sentence;

(c) only if interested in pursuing an educational activity.

Inmate participants and nonparticipants were asked a similar question during the interviews. By far, the greater proportion of respondents (65 percent) favoured voluntary participation in educational assessments. Many respondents indicated their opposition to "mandatory anything." Other respondents indicated that forcing people to do something against their will would only create problems all around. Although most questionnaire respondents lent towards the (c) option, during the inmate interviews, a fourth option emerged - the possibility of inmates having an educational assessment on request even though they had no intention of participating in the school program at that time. Some of them felt it would be useful to know where they stood and there might be some "surprises." Inmates could test higher than they imagine they would and this would be a boost to self-confidence and may act as a motivator and lead the inmate to thinking about educational possibilities. Some

instructors who had experience with federal corrections indicated that if assessments were mandatory, inmates would refuse to write, or purposely "fail" in order to be placed in school as an "easy option." On the other hand, some respondents felt that more could be done to make inmates aware of the option and correctional staff (classification officers, case managers) could suggest that educational assessment might be "a wise option." One ABE Administrator suggested that intake was not a good time to address these issues, as inmates are often confused, angry or resentful when they come into an institution. If they were interviewed a week or so later, however, they may have settled down and be more willing to listen to staff and consider educational options positively.

Although the majority favoured voluntary assessments, a considerable proportion (27 percent) favoured assessments for all inmates on entry for the first time. It is interesting to note that 36 percent of Inmate Ps, 30 percent of Inmate Non Ps and 33 percent of ABE Administrators and Halfway Agencies favoured this option.

Mandatory attendance. Again, the results in Table 38 show that the majority (77 percent) do not favour mandatory attendance in school programs. Again, however, there was a substantial proportion (19 percent) who did favour it. Another analysis revealed some interesting correlations.

With the groups other than inmates, those who favoured mandatory attendance for inmates with low education or literacy difficulties also favoured mandatory assessments. Among the literacy groups, three of the seven respondents (43 percent) favoured mandatory attendance if, after assessment, serious literacy or numeracy difficulties were evident.

Twenty-one percent of inmate Non Ps and 38 percent of inmate Ps favoured mandatory attendance for those with low levels of education (below Grade 8) as well as those with reading, writing and math problems with stated higher levels of education. There was an interesting finding. Nine of the 12 inmate Non Ps who favoured mandatory attendance also favoured mandatory testing after the first sentence. These people were all either Native or other people with limited schooling and literacy abilities. One of the older Native respondents however, stressed that it should be mandatory "only for the younger ones." As these people were Non Ps, the fact that they favoured mandatory testing and mandatory attendance could reflect a "what might have been" situation. Their preferences could be interpreted as an indirect appeal for the help they never had. The higher percentage of inmate Ps favouring mandatory attendance could reflect their own positive experiences with the prison education programs. The front-line people in prison education were strongly

against mandatory attendance, except for the two already noted. Apart from obvious difficulties of space and staffing, many stressed that the voluntary nature is the strength of the program although one instructor felt it should be mandatory for those under 19 years who have difficulties with reading, writing and math. Instructors want willing learners. Many felt, however, that more could be done in Corrections to encourage inmates to think about educational possibilities.

Incentives. Eighty-four of 124 respondents (68 percent) felt that there should be some incentives for attending a prison education program. The highest percentages of respondents thinking this way were with the Halfway Agencies (78 percent), and Inmate Non Ps (75 percent). They were followed by Inmate Ps (64 percent) and Instructors (61 percent). Fifty-three percent of Directors felt there should be incentives for attending educational programs. Some of these Directors indicated that incentives were already in place. In one of the Regions, all correctional centres were against incentives. This finding may indicate a prevailing philosophy or policy in that Region.

The most common incentive mentioned or discussed was pay. The prevailing notion was that participants in educational programs should be paid at the work rate not the

minimum daily pay rate in effect for all. Some respondents mentioned that many inmates prefer work to school because of the higher pay rate. Tables 20 and 21 in chapter 4 of this report showed that a preference for work was a factor mentioned in not attending school and in dropping out of school. An inmate in a secure institution makes about $10 a week. If he is a smoker, his tobacco costs $8 from the canteen. Obviously there is little left over for any needs or expenses. Even a non-smoker does not have much to spend or save.

The high percentage of Inmate Non Ps indicating that there should be incentives is noteworthy, although some people may view this with caution. There was an opinion expressed more than once by those not in favour of pay incentives that inmates would see school as a "scam" and way out of work, if they were offered a pay rate equivalent to work. Careful screening and monitoring of work done in school would help sort out "scammers." The prevailing notion among the 26 percent not in favour of incentives was that educational achievement was its own reward. Some who were not in favour of incentives also said that there should not be any disincentives (or penalties) - indicating a preference, one assumes, for the status quo. The situation in the open centres or camps varies. They are seen primarily as work camps and school is seen in some of them

as interfering with work. Hence, school is a voluntary activity at night. In others, it is seen as part of work and offenders can attend during the day, although there is an underlying suggestion in these cases that school is seen as the easier option to work!

Other incentives that were mentioned were "positive strokes", privileges, e.g. granting of TAs, awarding of certificates of recognition or achievement that would have some value on the outside, release to an educational halfway house where offenders could acquire business and or trades experience and skills.

LIBRARY SERVICES AND RESOURCES

The B.C. Corrections Branch Service Delivery Standards on Inmate Work, Education and Recreation Programs indicate that every correctional centre shall provide and/or ensure inmate access to a library (see Appendix 3). As the provision of books and library services are related to literacy needs and maintenance, inmates, instructors and directors of the Correctional centres were asked questions concerning libraries. Directors were asked whether they had a legal library and a recreational library and whether the space and collections were adequate. Table 39 shows the results. Directors were also asked whether there were adequate funds to resource the educational and library facilities and to make any comments on this aspect. Only

four Directors (three from the Interior Region) indicated resources were adequate. Three Directors did not answer the question, and one was ambivalent saying that there was no specific budget for educational program resources, but money came out of other designated funds. Nine of the Directors felt funds were inadequate for purchasing new materials and subscriptions.

TABLE 39. Presence and Adequacy of Library Services in Correctional Centres as Perceived by Directors (N=17)

Library Service	Institution			Total
	Secure (N=6)	Open (N=9)	CCC (N=2)	
Legal library:				
- Present	6	2[a]	-	8
- Adequate collection	5	2	-	7
- Adequate space	5	2	-	7
Recreational library:				
- Present	6	9	-	15
- Adequate collection	4	5	-	9
- Adequate space	6	7	-	13

[a] In addition, one of the open centres said they had access to two legal libraries.

Of the libraries visited by the researcher as part of this study, the best in terms of both physical layout and collections was that of the Secure Unit in BCCW. Women in the Open Living Unit, as mentioned earlier, are allowed library privileges in the Metrotown library in Burnaby. The physical layout is also good at FRCC and KRCC although the latter appears to have a superior collection, especially of hardcover books. Forty-five of 78 inmates interviewed said they had used the correctional centre library. Inmates told the researcher that both the Surrey Pre-Trial and Vancouver Pre-Trial Centres had better libraries than other centres in the Fraser Region, although the Director of VPSC indicated the recreational collection was inadequate. Inmates also felt the KRCC library was a good one.

As the secure centres are either remand centres, or centres housing remand inmate and sentenced inmates, there needs to be a legal collection available for inmate consultation in relation to appeals and other matters. The researcher found that legal "library" is something of a misnomer - typically, it is a collection of documents and files in a locked filing cabinet or locked space in or adjacent to the recreational library. Most inmates did not appear to know that there was a legal library. Some remand inmates who had used it said there was not enough time given to consult the sources. As there are usually no remand

prisoners in the open centres, this may be the reason for the general lack of a legal library. The community correctional centres are small and inmates presumably could have access, if need be, to community library resources. Nevertheless, it seems surprising that there is no recreational "library" or collection acknowledged by Directors of these centres.

The recreational libraries in secure centres are only open to inmates at specific times. Inmates are usually allowed to visit the library once a week and exchange books. The number of inmates allowed from each living unit and the number of books allowed appear to vary from institution to institution. Some of the living units appear also to have a rack of well-worn pocket books for inmate use. Inmates swap books with each other from library collections if they have read the books they took out. Many inmates said that they would like to be able to visit the library more often or be able to take out more books. The facilities are poorest in the Prince George RCC. The John Howard Society and the College of New Caledonia help provide library services from the community to the inmates.

In the camps or open centres, typically the library is in an open building which inmates can access more freely than in the secure centres. Often, the "library" shares part of a multi-purpose building. The collections are mainly

paperback books, often outdated and not catalogued. Library collections in most centres appear to depend on donations from community groups or cast-offs from public libraries such as the Carnegie Library in Vancouver. Pleas from Directors were for more reference materials, more up-to-date and specialized materials (e.g. for sex offender treatment) and for cataloguing as well as for more funds for books generally.

Only four of the 12 academic instructors said they used the correctional centre library. In one of these instances (VIRCC) the instructor is responsible for the libraries and the library for the general population shares the same space with the school. In another two instances (BCCW and FRCC) the libraries are adjacent or very close to the school area. In the fourth instance (Surrey PSC) the library is said to be good. Eleven of 12 instructors said the library collections were not adequate in the correctional centres. The twelfth instructor said he did not know. Instructors were also asked whether there was a literacy collection in the library. Eight said there was not (two of the eight were from an institution that did not have a proper library facility). One instructor who does not teach at the literacy level said he did not know. Two instructors said there was a very small collection. Only one instructor said "yes" without any comments.

Instructors were also asked whether they thought there were adequate funds for purchase of new materials and instructional aids for their programs. Only two instructors said, "Yes." Four instructors gave no answer. The other six instructors generally said, "No", and made comments. One instructor said resources were adequate for the school, but not for the library. Another centre needs funds to build up the recreational library and for special purposes such as literacy. Another instructor feels that students should not have to pay fees for GED tests nor for correspondence course books (or, if they do, that these fees should be refunded if books are returned). Two instructors would like computers and software programs.

EDUCATIONAL STAFF PERSON WITHIN B.C. CORRECTIONS

Directors of correctional centres, ABE Administrators, Halfway Agencies, and Literacy Groups were all asked whether they thought that there should be someone within the provincial government who has responsibility for educational programs in B.C. Corrections. Table 40 shows the results.

TABLE 40. Educational Staff Person in B.C. Corrections

Group	Yes	No	Other[a]	Total
Directors	11	5	-	17
ABE Administrators	4	1	1	6
Halfway Agencies	6	-	3	9
Literacy Groups	5	-	2	7
TOTAL	26	6	7	39
%	67	15	18	100

[a] Mainly didn't know, or no answer, some comments

The majority obviously feels there should be someone in B.C. Corrections with responsibility for educational programs. One secure centre, three open centres and one community CC were the centres who said there should not be someone. One respondent felt education was a regional responsibility within the province and that each region should be served by one contractor. (This works in some corrections regions where centres coincide with college

regions, but other corrections regions are served by several colleges so a regional contract with one college would not work, if the colleges are assumed to be the main educational program providers.) The other Directors who said "No", just felt such a position was unnecessary. One said, "No more bureaucrats!" Another felt that the position would consume scarce dollars that could be used at the local level.

Among the Directors who said, "Yes" to the question, there was nevertheless some divergence of opinion. One person thought that there was already someone responsible within the Ministry, i.e. the Assistant Deputy Minister through the Regional Directors. Another Director thought that there should be someone in the Corrections Branch, but the person would not be effective unless there was a commitment to education from Senior Management. Another Director felt it would be alright provided that each facility received a staff position to act as coordinator to handle the envisioned increase in workload at the receiving end! The five remaining Directors saw such a person being responsible for offering vision, coordination, setting of minimal standards for educational service delivery, monitoring of contracts, needs assessment, ensuring equitable distribution of funds to all facilities for educational purposes, and advocating for regional needs.

There was an underlying fear of centralization. This

was also expressed in the one "other" answer. This respondent doubted that someone could oversee everything effectively and felt educational programming decisions should be left to individual Directors and then to the Regional Director.

Four ABE Administrators felt that there should be someone with responsibility for education in correctional centres. One Administrator felt that the person should be an educator and have access to the purse-strings. Two other Administrators felt that the responsibility should rest within the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. Both Administrators pointed to ongoing confusion between technical and financial responsibility for education programs in correctional centres. The situation seems to arise out of the limited contract dollars available from the Corrections Branch for provision of educational services which puts the colleges in a position of "topping up" contracts in order to offer what they feel is a quality service and prevent the contracts from going out to tender to private or other bidders. The fourth ABE Administrator sees the need for someone who will provide vision and leadership to change existing attitudes towards education among correctional personnel. Interministerial cooperation was stressed. Some Administrators feel their college has developed a good relationship with correctional staff at the

centres they serve. The ABE Administrator who answered, "No" to the question nevertheless said that there should be links between the Corrections Branch and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. The B.C. Borstal Association refrained from answering as it said it did not know enough about the current situation to comment.

The community respondents favoured having someone responsible for education programs in Corrections. Nobody was against the suggestion. The "other" category consisted of people who were undecided. Comments made stressed that there needed to be someone if education/literacy was to be a priority and there was to be consistency in policy and direction. One group suggested that a policy analyst be designated to work with colleges and school districts in the provision of educational services. Concern was also expressed about the 17 to 19 year old group of offenders in youth custody who do not attend school. One adult centre also feels that offenders under 19 years of age should attend school.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM EXPANSION

Eleven of 13 Directors (85 percent) whose centres currently have educational programs said the programs could be expanded if more money was available for contracting instructional staff. One Director did not answer; the other said, "No" but his was an institution with an apparently

good range of programs.

Inmates also felt and requested that programs be expanded (see Chapter 4). Both Inmate Ps and Inmate Non Ps had many suggestions as to other kinds of educational activities they would like to see in correctional centres. Table 41 shows the most common requests. The list speaks for itself, but inmates (59 percent) stressed the importance of trades training. Many see the ability to get and hold a job as a way out of their current lifestyle. One inmate said he had stayed out of trouble for three years because he had a steady job and was only "doing time" now because of charges from three years ago. Many inmates, even if currently working at the correctional centres, feel keenly the lack of training and certification. The work they do or learn to do on the inside has no value on the outside. The need for counselling and information is also job-related. Inmates also requested community contacts and again many stressed the importance of volunteers. Loneliness and isolation from family and friends as well as news from the outside are probably all contributing factors to the desire for links with the community.

TABLE 41. Educational Activities Suggested by Inmates (N=78)

Activity	Number of Mentions
Trades Training:	
General[a]	9
Carpentry	11
Mechanics-related[b]	9
Welding	8
Cooking/chef training	4
Other	
Vocational Counselling and Information Workshops[c]	13
Life Skills and Related Personal Counselling[d]	10
Musical activity (instruments)	12
Computer skills and graphics	5
Art studio	5
Drama	2
More outside contact with community groups[e]	11
More Native activities	7
More up-to-date videos	3
TOTAL	114

a
Some inmates just said, "more trades training", some said more emphasis on pre-requisites for such training.

b
This item includes auto-mechanics, heavy-duty mechanics, and small engine repair.

c
Topics suggested were: job search techniques, resume writing, letter-writing, information on loans, oral skills (how to ask for help). Also requested was more assistance in pre-release circumstances.

d
Stress/anger management, and counselling for victims of sexual abuse were particularly requested.

e
More contacts in general were felt to be good, but especially for team sports, special events, and holiday times (e.g. Christmas).

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

This project was designed to attempt to assess the needs and make recommendations about literacy programs for a specific segment of the incarcerated population in B.C. Correctional Centres - low literate adults. In many ways it was an exploratory study. The presence of many open-ended questions has allowed respondents to provide their own answers which have enriched the tapestry of this report. Because random sampling was not used, it is not possible to extrapolate from the sample in this study and apply results to all inmates. However, the size of the sample within the target population of inmates with less than Grade 10 educational attainment, is sufficient to suggest that their experiences, attitudes and opinions would be typical of the majority in the target group. The high rate of questionnaire responses from other groups helps to confirm or deny certain issues and trends. The findings in this report help provide a snapshot of conditions prevailing in February-March, 1992 in relation to educational programs and needs in B.C. Corrections. From these findings several recommendations may be made.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND STANDARDS

Inherent in the Beliefs, Goals and Strategies of the

B.C. Corrections Branch is the idea of education as a constructive activity for offenders in custody. To this end, educational programs are provided in 15 of the 17 secure and open correctional centres through contracts with community colleges, private instructors, or other agencies. Education is nested within the sentencing principle of rehabilitation within B.C. Corrections.

The Declaration of Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990. The sixth principle states:

> All prisoners shall have the right to take part in cultural life and to education directed to the full development of the human personality (Cosman, 1989).

The Education and Criminal Justice Programme of the International Council for Adult Education is working, among other things, to formulate standards for cultural and creative activities in prisons and have them accepted. Many of the suggested areas of standards are directly linked to questions raised in this study. The Correctional Education Association developed and published Standards for Adult and Juvenile Correctional Education Programs (1988) as applicable to state and federal correctional agencies in the U.S.A. The current service delivery standards of B.C. Corrections in relation to education and cultural life in correctional institutions appear inadequate. Furthermore,

there appears to be inequity among the five regions of the province and individual institutions as to the nature and extent of educational programs and practices.

In terms of literacy and English language training which require intensive one-on-one instruction there is insufficient time and instructional staff to meet these needs. In the recent past, and especially this last winter (1991-92) volunteers have been trained to work with inmates. These projects have one-time funding only through the federal-provincial literacy cost-shared initiatives of the National Literacy Secretariat, and the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. It is also clear that the amount of contract dollars available for educational programs varies with the Corrections Regions in the province and is insufficient in most cases for the need which has been expressed. Some colleges have "topped up" the contract dollars in order to continue providing the service which they have done for many years. Not to do this, means the correctional centres can go to tender and programs may be jeopardized. There are strong arguments to be made for correctional centres having a partnership with a local community college. The services of the college are there for instructors and inmates to fall back on and use when required. Transfers to different centres may be made easier if there is similarity in course offerings for

inmates. In most cases, however, this study has shown that program offerings are inadequate. Inmates, instructors and Directors have requested and or indicated that programs be expanded in terms of contact time throughout the year and in program offerings. In addition, educational programs or activities are needed in two institutions which currently have no programs.

If the sixth principle on the Treatment of Prisoners quoted above is acknowledged, then it seems reasonable to state that:

> **All inmates in B.C. Corrections should have equal opportunity to education and to cultural activities regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, or other status.**

Inmates are first and foremost human beings and they themselves are ultimately responsible for their own rehabilitation. But, if rehabilitation is a serious goal of B.C. Corrections, then more thought and effort must go into educational and cultural program activities.

It is therefore recommended that:

1. B.C. Corrections Branch more clearly define and state its policy concerning (a) the role and relative importance of education in prison; (b) inmates right to learn; (c) educational aims and priorities.
2. B.C. Corrections Branch embark on the development

of standards for educational program activity and cultural activities for all institutions in the province so that equitable arrangements may be put in place in all regions.

3. B.C. Corrections Branch designate staff at a senior level to advise on, give leadership to, and advocate for education programs in correctional institutions in the province.

4. B.C. Corrections Branch, through designated personnel, work cooperatively with other B.C. Ministries, notably the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, and the Library Services Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture, with the purpose of enhancing and further developing educational and cultural programs in correctional institutions in the province.

5. B.C. Corrections Branch take initiative to provide and support training and professional development opportunities for all instructors working in its institutions as well as for front-line correctional staff in relation to educational programs and issues concerning inmates and corrections.

6. B.C. Corrections Branch reconsider its policy on non-provision of vocational training and

investigate how some trades training with suitable accreditation could be implemented for inmates in the province. The experience of other provinces especially Ontario should be examined in this regard.

7. B.C. Corrections Branch review the pay policies in place in the various institutions for those attending educational programs and strive for equity across the province. In particular, serious consideration be given to treating school attendance as work for pay purposes.

8. B.C. Corrections ensure that sufficient funds are available in all regions of the province to provide programs on a year-round basis according to need and demand and with regard to equitable distribution of program opportunities, facilities and equipment.

IMPROVEMENT OF CURRENT SERVICES FOR LOW-LITERATE ADULTS

Twenty-six percent of the inmate sample in this study had Grade 6 or less educational level, a further 38 percent had Grade 7 or Grade 8. When Inmate Non Ps were asked to read, thirty-two percent either did not read or read at or below a Grade 6 level, a further 36 percent read at the Grade 7 to 8 level. The study has shown that sizeable numbers of inmates want to improve their reading, writing,

spelling and math. While only 10 percent of the total sample could be characterized as having severe literacy difficulties, the majority of the remainder are in the semi-literate/numerate category. Even among the inmates who had completed elementary schooling or higher, there was common acknowledgement that writing skills and math skills needed improving.

This study probably interviewed the most motivated inmates-those already in prison education programs, those who had applied to attend, and those curious enough to volunteer themselves for an interview about education. Even so, those expressing an interest in education and desiring to improve themselves, appear to be greater in most instances than the capacity of the prison schools to handle them. There is not enough instructional time to follow through. Given the limited contracts, and short sentences or turnover time of inmates, it is possible that many are not told about the educational programs by correctional staff. Certainly the findings in this study showed that word-of-mouth seemed to be the way many found out about programs. There need to be ways for those who most need help to find out about the program, and there need to be more innovative ways of creating and delivering educational activities for inmates who cannot get into the school. A new stimulus could set off a positive chain reaction.

Philosophically, Chapter 6 showed that all groups involved in this study were not in favour of mandatory educational assessments or mandatory attendance. However, if there is concern about the lowest educated inmates, serious thought must be given to the finding of this study that these inmates favoured mandatory attendance for inmates with low literacy skills and also favoured mandatory educational assessments when inmates are incarcerated for the first time. Intake personnel must be made aware of this situation and strategies devised for obtaining an assessment. In the Ontario Correctional Centres, inmates are asked to read a simple passage, and if they make more than five mistakes, they have to see the education officer. Perhaps some such simple device could be used for inmates suspected of having literacy difficulties. The "test" need not be done at the first meeting, as first time offenders may be anxious, confused and angry. A note could be made and the inmate called down after a week or so, given the "test" and an interview on educational experiences, interests, needs. These inmates should then be encouraged to attend the school program, or hook up with a tutor.

Tutoring programs are an accepted part of literacy practice, although they are generally not funded to the extent they should be. It is interesting to note that all Inmate Ps and a high proportion of Inmate Non Ps favoured

community tutors. In the case of the Inmate Non Ps it was the most favoured learning arrangement. These findings should surely give encouragement to those programs and groups who have initiated or tried to initiate tutor training programs. Inmate tutoring programs were also perceived favourably for the most part, although these programs would need more careful "marketing" to inmates to counteract inmate skepticism. The project has shown that many inmates turn to others whom they respect when they need help with reading, writing or math. Inmate tutoring would build on these relationships. Inmate tutors, of course, could be released or transferred, but could continue tutoring in their other institutions. This could be a bonus in isolated settings. Community tutors are more likely to provide continuity when an inmate is released and may provide a vital link to other institutions and agencies upon release. Community tutors have a pre-release role to play and fit within the parameters of the B.C. Corrections Mission. Community tutors should be supported.

Educational activities need not be limited to a school program. Inmates have suggested and shown a clear need for educational and vocational information and counselling. Many inmates, as we have seen, had a troubled schooling; many went to juvenile centres where their education was "completed." Many of them do not know their way around the

adult education system. More half-day and day workshops could be mounted on topics of pertinent interest, and skill-type workshops in writing, math or other subjects could also be offered. Some of these could also be related to cultural and creative activities for which inmates showed some preference (Tables 13, 16, 22, 41). As with adults in the general population, many undereducated adults find it difficult to attend school on a full-time basis (see Thomas, 1990). This does not mean that they should be denied other educational opportunities while incarcerated.

Unfortunately, many inmates cannot take full advantage of educational opportunities until their addictions or other problems are solved. Inmates who have been through a good Life Skills program, or other related type programs such as Anger Management and have begun to understand themselves and the reasons for their behaviour are more amenable to the opportunities provided by education and become more determined to change their lifestyle when released. In some cases therefore, it seems that the road to rehabilitation is through a combination of Life Skills and similar type programs, community tutors or other contacts and an educational program. Of course, all these can fail, if the circumstances on release are not favourable. Many inmates told the researcher that they prefer to do their time than to apply for parole because they do not have the necessary

supports on the outside. When they have completed their time, however, they are on their own to an even greater extent. Many have nowhere to go and little or no money, so it is often only a matter of days or weeks before they are once again embroiled in the criminal justice system and back on the "inside." Socio-economic conditions on "the outside" are powerful factors which can undo any good done on "the inside." There has to be more attention given to pre-release plans and improved attempts to link up with community agencies and halfway houses for provincial offenders.

All of the foregoing together with the findings of this study lead to the following recommendations. It is recommended that:

9. Correctional and educational staff work closely together in each of the institutions to devise strategies for detecting adults with low literacy skills and for encouraging them to participate in a suitable learning arrangement while incarcerated.
10. That all program options available to inmates be clearly explained to them upon intake or soon after, with special measures being undertaken to ensure that immigrants whose first language is not English and low-literate adults understand the options available.

11. a) Correctional staff work with educational staff to encourage and support the training and use of inmate (peer) tutors and community tutors for prison education programs.

    b) B.C. Corrections recognize the merits and advantages of tutorial arrangements and financially support such efforts as a viable program option.

12. Correctional staff and educational staff work together to plan educational and cultural activities of a short-term nature such as workshops on a regular basis in their institutions.

13. Correctional staff and educational staff work together to devise ways for improving educational information and counselling sessions especially prior to inmate release and to work with community agencies to improve bridging and transitions back into the community.

14. Correctional staff and educational staff work together to provide some kind of valid recognition for the educational and work achievements accomplished by inmates while incarcerated.

15. Correctional and educational staff seriously investigate ways for eliminating fees and purchase of books for correspondence courses and other "open learning" situations, in order to encourage

participation in alternative educational options which inmates carry over on release.

16. Correctional staff consult with educational staff before transferring an inmate who is in the school program and making progress in order to minimize disruptions in that progress.
17. Correctional staff seriously consider and request implementation of Life Skills or similar kinds of courses in institutions where these are not offered.
18. Correctional staff, educational staff, and community agencies work together to provide more community contacts and mentoring type relationships in general.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE LITERACY ENVIRONMENT IN CORRECTIONAL CENTRES

Reading is one of the few activities many inmates can carry out while incarcerated and it can be a constructive alternative to watching television. Inmates need to be able to check on word meanings when they see an unfamiliar word while reading; they also need to check on spelling while writing. Some inmates said that they played word games such as Scrabble. Dictionaries are useful for building up word power. Many inmates also expressed a thirst for news of the outside. Policy on provision of newspapers seems to vary with the institutions and even within the same institution. Most libraries and library services also need to be

improved. The establishment of cultural standards called for in Recommendation 2, would help in this regard.

However, there are more immediate steps which could be implemented to improve the literacy environment. It is therefore recommended that:

19. Correctional staff take the necessary steps to improve library services in all institutions by: a) designating a librarian in each institution which does not have one. (Responsible inmates and community agencies could be approached to provide such services. Consideration should also be given to separating the library functions from the instructional function where these are combined.); b) cataloguing collections where this has not been done; c) improving reference collections; d) acquiring a basic literacy collection for low-literate adults; e) building up collections generally, especially in relation to "how to" manuals and texts; f) improving magazine collections, especially obtaining more current copies of popular magazines such as "National Geographic"; g) extending library privileges for inmates either through more frequent visits, or more books borrowed per visit.

20. Correctional staff implement the following measures in <u>all</u> living units or dorms: a) provision of

dictionaries for easy access and reference by inmates; b) provision of other basic reference material such as atlases and encyclopedias where possible; c) provision of at least two copies of a daily provincial or national newspaper in addition to any local daily or weekly paper published in the community of the institution.

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APPENDIX A

B.C. ADULT CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES, 1991

APPENDIX A

B.C. ADULT CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES, 1991

NAME OF FACILITY	REGION	CATEGORY	REGULAR CAPACITY
Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre	Vancouver Island	Secure	150
Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women	Vancouver Metro	Secure	125
Vancouver Pretrial Services Centre	Vancouver Metro	Secure	150
Fraser Regional Correctional Centre	Fraser	Secure	254
Surrey Pretrial Services Centre	Fraser	Secure	150
Kamloops Regional Correctional Centre	Interior	Secure	142
Prince George Regional Correctional Centre	Northern	Secure	142
Nanaimo Correctional Centre	Vancouver Island	Open	90
New Haven Correctional Centre	Vancouver Metro	Open & Special	46
Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women- Open Living Unit	Vancouver Metro	Open	28
Alouette River Correctional Centre	Fraser	Open & Special	117
Ford Mountain Correctional Centre	Fraser	Open & Special	50
Stave Lake Correctional Centre	Fraser	Open & Special	55

APPENDIX A (Cont'd)
B.C. Adult Correctional Facilities, 1991

NAME OF FACILITY	REGION	CATEGORY	REGULAR CAPACITY
Mount Thurston Correctional Centre	Fraser	Open	55
Bear Creek Correctional Centre	Interior	Open	60
Rayleigh Correctional Centre	Interior	Open	60
Hutda Lake Correctional Centre	Northern	Open	60
Marpole Community Correctional Centre	Vancouver Metro	Community	18
Chilliwack Community Correctional Centre	Fraser	Community	22
Terrace Community Correctional Centre	Northern	Community	24

APPENDIX B

SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

DATE: March 1, 1989

SECTION: D2

PAGE: 1

YOUTH PROGRAMS - PROGRAM SERVICES

1. Every youth shall have the opportunity to participate in an educational program approved by the Ministry of Education.

Discussion:

Youths under the age of 15 must attend school by law, and youths 15 years and over should be encouraged to attend school in order to upgrade their formal academic training.

2. Male and female youths in youth programs shall have equal access to all program services and activities.

Discussion:

Traditionally, male youths far outnumber female youths in youth programs. Nonetheless, male and female youths should be encouraged to participate equally in all program services and activities provided by the youth program. The small numbers of females present must not preclude facilities and programs being offered to them.

3. The youth program shall make provision for youths to have periods of free, unplanned time during the course of the day's activities.

Discussion:

The youth program should provide youths with a range and level of leisure time activities commensurate and comparable to community standards. Youths need outlet for exercise of physical energy and emotional expression. Both planned and unplanned play provide opportunities for joy, fun, exuberance and creativity in a relaxed and pleasurable manner.

INMATE WORK, EDUCATION AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

*
8. Every correctional centre shall provide and/or ensure inmate access to:

a) an outdoor recreational area specifically designed for a variety of sports and recreational activities;
b) an indoor recreational area suitable for organized sports activities of both group and individual nature;
c) a library;
d) an area designed and equipped for arts and crafts.

(all centres)

Discussion:

The standard requires that access to the four facilities listed above be arranged in the community if they are not available on the grounds of the institution. Physical plant standards are more specific on items b) through d). The library referred to in the stancard is a recreational, general purpose, reading library and not the legal library referred to in the Inmate Rights standards.

It is recognized that certain specialized programs such as Boulder Bay will not require facilities in compliance with parts a) and b) above.

*
9. Every regional correctional centre providing facilities in compliance with standard #8 above shall designate an officer to plan, implement and coordinate recreational programs utilizing the recreational areas.

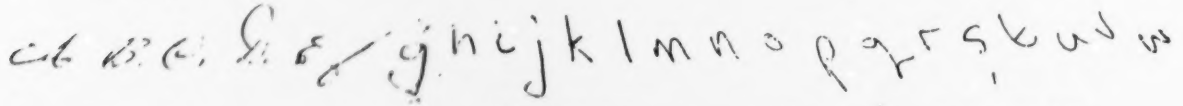
(secure settings)

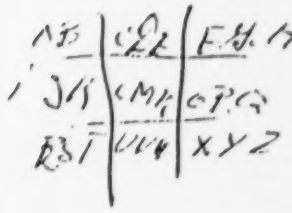
APPENDIX C

SELECTED SAMPLES OF INMATE NONPARTICIPANTS' WRITING

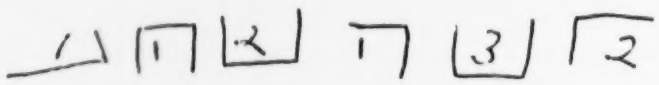
SAMPLE A

'Michel' - French-Canadian born in Quebec. 59 years old. No schooling in home area. Some literacy skills picked up in reform school and through life. Can sign full name. Knows alphabet. (See below.) Communicated with picture language.



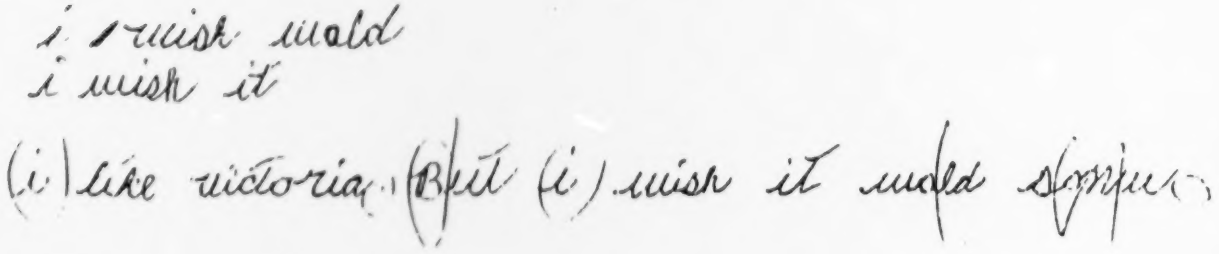


The "chemin des mots" at the left provides a memory key for writing. The researcher's first name - AUDREY - was written as below, using a number for the placement of the letter within its particular outline shape of the "chemin" which is also reproduced below.



SAMPLE B

'Bob' is a Native from the Central Interior of B.C. 24 years old. "Not much schooling". Had participated in a computer literacy program - PALS. Slow deliberate starts marked this piece of writing. Took about 6 minutes to produce.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SAMPLE C

'Jack' is a Native from the southern coastal area of B.C. Age - about 45 years old. Went as far as Grade 5, but then had to help to keep the family through working in logging and fishing. Alcoholic parents.

Reluctant to write. Knows he needs help. Researcher started with "Victoria is . . . " lead in. Did not know how to spell Victoria, so that was provided. All underlined words were provided on request. The ideas and the writing, except for "Victoria" belong to 'Jack'.

Victoria is a pretty city many people come to visit it

SAMPLE D

'Mike' went to school in B.C. He went as far as Grade 6 on the outside and continued with schooling in juvenile custody. 19 years old. Attacked the writing quickly and then said "That's it!"

I was born in edson, alberta, I never knew much about it. fact of remember where I used to live in the Rocky Mountains we had to move from there just because of a family matter. thats all I have to say.

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SAMPLE E

'Brian' said he completed Grade 7, but stayed in school until he was 18 years old and "It was time to go". He is 24 years old. Writes often to his girlfriend. Had wanted to have a tutor at the local community college, but landed in jail instead. This piece was worked on during a 'lock-in' period, so 'Brian' had about one-half an hour to produce this piece. The subject is "Rodeos".

Bull riding you use one hand to ride and one arm in the air for balance and you could spur for more points. And the cowboys & cowgirls would just go into the arena and do there stuff then when there done, they would go back to there camps or go and watch there friends ride. But there's alot more to rodeo's like there Bullriding and Bareback riding and Saddlebronk riding and steerwrestling and roperoping for men, team sports are team roping and for women there are steerdebbing and barrelracing and polebending and sometimes roperoping too. And after the rodeo season ends they go back home and go to work where ever they find work or there family. Because a friend of mine commited suicide in a motel room he was a 7 time worldchamp of rodeoing he leave a his family his wife and kids behind. And me 2 time worldchamp in the box and cant find work because of schooling need a grade 10 or grade 12 then you could get a better job, a higher paying job.

SAMPLE F

'Greg' was about 20 years old. He had gone as far as Grade 8 in B.C. schools.

At (Middleton I worked alot more than I relax. The food here at times could be better. But I think it'd alot better here than it is at Prince Rupert. I hope I will let time pass so I can get out of here.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SAMPLE G

'Ron' had completed Grade 9 in B.C. schools. He was about 30 years old. He said he doesn't write much, but he concentrated on the task. He prefers printing to writing.

I was raised in the community of Cultus Lake, a small village outside of Chilliwack. It is generally thought of as a "tourist town" because in the summer months it is the home away from home of hundreds upon hundreds of tourists. I believe this is because of the beautiful setting in the heart of the Fraser Valley, and the fact it has an array of tourist oriented activities to choose from. Such as water slides, go carts, horse riding and so on.

SAMPLE H

'Kevin' said he had Grade 11 except in math and science. He also prefers printing to writing. He writes poetry and would like to hone his writing skills so he could write scripts for dramatic skits etc. He started quickly and concentrated on the task. These lines were inspired by a memory from an experience in Golden Ears Provincial Park. 'Kevin' is about 30 years old.

THE SUN CAME DOWN IN A BLUE
RED HAZE AND CAST OUR SHADOWS
LONG ACROSS THE LOWER HILLS, AND
EVEN IN THE LAKE 2700 FEET BELOW
I COULD STILL MAKE OUR FEATURES OUT.

Queen's Printer for British Columbia©
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